Lawrence Durrell and the Alexandria quartet: influences shaping his fiction.

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LAWRENCE DURRELL AND THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET : INFLUENCES SHAPING HIS FICTION

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ABSTRACT

Lawrence Durrell's literary development has been influenced, to a great extent, by the prevailing ideas of the 1920's and 1930's. The influence of Eliot, Einstein, and Freud on Durrell is very striking and has been noted by various critics. It should be noted, however, that though the impact of these men and their work can be traced in Durrell's oeuvre, his achievement is completely individual, absolutely Durrellian. There are, of course, other factors which contributed considerably to his creative endeavours. One of the most conspicuous of these is Greece, especially Greek landscape, which has had a profound effect on Durrell's life and thought.

Durrell's greatest achievement, so far, is The Alexandria Quartet, a tetralogy of novels, comprising Justine (1957); Balthazar (1958); Mountolive (1958); and Clea (1960). Since the appearance of the four volumes of the Quartet, Durrell has been hailed as a master of creative writing as well as dismissed as a pompous charlatan. The great controversy over the Quartet still continues, especially as the tetralogy is still considered by his admirers to be Durrell's magnum opus in spite of a number of other works preceding and succeeding it. My argument, therefore, will concentrate mainly on the Quartet within the framework of a thesis which sets out to deal with influences on Durrell's life and work in a more general way.

My introductory chapter is an attempt to focus on the dominant Greek influence on Durrell's life and thought by giving a bird's eye view of his life and work. The second chapter examines briefly the works where the Greek influence is most conspicuous. Chapter III discusses the effect of the predominant Western view of the orient and orientals on Durrell's outlook, with especial reference to the Quartet. Chapter IV examines Durrell's main sources of information about Egypt, books he relied on heavily when depicting the local scene in the Quartet. Chapter V concentrates on three works to illustrate, through their recurrent themes, how Durrell has been influenced in different ways by Einstein, Eliot and Freud. The final chapter reiterates and sums up my thesis about Durrell.

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To my father

CHAPTER I

LAWRENCE DURRELL : THE EXPATRIATE

Lawrence Durrell was born at Jullundur in India, near the Tibetan frontier, on the 27th of February 1912, of Protestant Irish-English stock. The family later moved to Kurseong where his father, an engineer, had a three year contract for work on a mountain railway. Lawrence Durrell attended the Jesuit College at Darjeeling. From the window of his home he looked out on Mt. Everest where he saw the greenest jungles and the whitest snow. His consciousness was saturated with the immediacy of a land in which magic and mystery dominate. He told Marc Alyn in a private interview that his family had been in India for three generations, and that when he was born neither his father nor his mother had seen England. The influence of India on Durrell is most noticeable in his poem "Cities, Plains and People": he gives a brief biographical sketch of the "mortal boy" who is the subject of the poem and who had his childhood in India, where he could see "the Himalayas like lambs there/Stir their huge joints".(1)

In 1923, when Durrell was about twelve, his father sent him and his younger brother Leslie to England, against his mother's wishes, "to get the hallmark" as his father used to say. Durrell has never forgotten that his father had forced him to go to England, and he has attributed his failure to pass any university entrance examination to psychological reasons. In England, he attended St. Olave and St. Saviour's Grammar School and, later, St. Edmund's in Canterbury. Durrell's image of England was formed during these years of childhood and adolescence and has

never quitted him. England bored him, conveying a sense of death which he subsequently described in The Black Book (1938).

After his father's death, Durrell left school and went to live in Bloomsbury where he tried a number of jobs. He worked as a jazz pianist and composer for some time in the Blue Peter Night Club. He also worked for an estate agent, and ran a photographic studio together with Nancy Myers who was an art student at the time before she became Durrell's first wife in 1935. During this period Durrell and Nancy met George Wilkinson and his wife Pam, and the two couples became great friends. It was during his stay with the Wilkinsons in a cottage at Loxwood in Sussex that Durrell wrote a great part of his first novel, Pied Piper of Lovers (1935), at the age of twenty-three. This is an autobiographical novel depicting Durrell's boyhood and early manhood. Walsh Clifton, like Durrell, is the son of an engineer working in India. After a childhood in India, Walsh is sent to England for education. Durrell supplies a detailed description of life in England, revealing the boredom and bitterness of the children who are sent "home" for school and have to stay with their relatives.

Durrell's first novel, however unsuccessful it may be as a work of art, draws our attention to early influences on him. His schooldays in England have undoubtedly left an indelible mark. Both Saki and Kipling had similar experiences during their upbringing which also had a lasting effect on their writing.(2)

Durrell's stay in England was an unhappy period. When Durrell's mother and the rest of the family decided to leave

India and settle in Bournemouth, Durrell and his wife Nancy left Sussex and joined them for a while. But Durrell could not feel at home because England impregnated him with a sense of death and misery. He had to seek another place to live, to be able to see England from a distance as an expatriate. He told Henry Miller in a letter that England

> Wrung my guts out of me and tried to destroy anything singular and unique in me. My so-called upbringing was quite an uproar. I have always broken stable when I was unhappy. The list of schools I've been to would be a yard long. I failed every known civil service exam. (3)

In 1935 Durrell persuaded his family to leave England and to move to the Greek island of Corfu. Gerald Durrell, in his humorous book My Family and Other Animals, gives a ludicrous but true account of his brother during his uncomfortable stay in Bournemouth and his insistence on seeking another place of residence for the whole family. Lawrence Durrell was tempted to leave England by his friend George Wilkinson who had left for Corfu and kept sending letters describing the heavenly island.

At this time an important friendship began between Henry Miller and Durrell. The publication of Miller's Tropic of Cancer (1934) had a great effect on the shaping of Durrell's career, as he later confessed in a letter to Miller:

> ... It freed me immediately ... Tropic taught me a valuable thing. To write about people I knew something about. Imagine it! I had this collection of grotesques sitting inside and I hadn't written a line about them - only about heroic Englishmen and dove-like girls... The whole collection of men and women opened up for me like a razor. (4)

The friendship between Durrell and Miller was cemented when they met in Miller's Villa Seurat in Paris in 1937. In the same

year, Durrell's second novel, Panic Spring, was published under the pseudonym of Charles Norden. Panic Spring was written in Corfu, and the influence of Greece is very strong since the setting is a kind of Utopia, Durrell's Utopia of living leisurely on a Greek island. The novel, however, met the same unsuccessful fate as its predecessor.

Durrell's first novel to receive critical acclaim is The Black Book (1938), which was ignited by Miller's Tropic of Cancer. As some critics have observed, however, there is another and more substantial influence on Durrell's first successful novel: T.S. Eliot. A great affinity between The Black Book and Eliot's poem The Waste Land is easily discernible. Both Miller and Eliot have played a vital part in shaping Durrell's career. In a letter to Miller, Durrell emphasizes these early influences:

> As for "influences", I was asked who my "guides and mentors" were and replied: "Among writers Miller for or rather by example and Eliot for advice". This is exactly it. (5)

Miller freed him to choose any subject he liked from real life, and Eliot advised him, particularly about his poems, and inspired him with a theme for one of his books. The main themes of The Black Book are sex and death, and Durrell describes it as "a scenario of despair". It is both a poetic and naturalistic evocation of dead life in dead land. He ends the book on a pessimistic note:

> It is morning. Born in an empty house, no zodiac; spawned by the fish, volatile, cunning, durable in passion. Boy in an ark on a black rock. Greece lies dead among the oak leaves. (6)

When The Black Book came out, Miller hailed Durrell as

"father of the heraldic line"; twenty years later Miller wrote his reminiscences of "Durrell of The Black Book Days":

> A devil of a worker, for one thing. And, like Flaubert, a stickler for the right word, the precise image, the Gongora effect.... The man with a nose for 'place' - who could write of Patmos, Corfu, Cyprus, Jerusalem, Alexandria and make you wonder what ancient god guided his footsteps, cleared his vision. (7)

After the publication of The Black Book, Miller visited his friend Durrell in Corfu and wrote his travel book, The Colossus of Maroussi (1941), about his impressions of the Greek island. Durrell's own book about the same island followed a few years later: Prospero's Cell (1945). A comparative study between these two works reveals how each writer differs greatly in expressing his admiration or appreciation of the island. Whereas Durrell's attitude is more romantic, singing paeans of praise for everything Greek, Miller's is realistic and down to earth as he criticises certain aspects of Corfian life, although he commends others. For instance, Miller admired the Corfian village where the Durrells stayed, but he disliked the city of Corfu.

After the publication of The Black Book, Durrell taught at the Institute of English Studies in Athens for six months in 1939, but he could not get on with the director; he had a similar job in Kalamata with the British Council till 1940. Then he joined the Foreign Office, and in April 1941 the invading German troops forced him to flee in a caique with his wife and baby to Crete, where they stayed for six weeks, and then to Egypt. The war knocked him off his perch to be "Churchill's prisoner" as soon as he reached Egypt. He explained in an

interview:

> When I came to Cairo I was Churchill's prisoner. I was a refugee, you see. All our passports had been taken away until security had cleared it, and it was useless my saying I was a member of the British Embassy in Athens. They put me in a concentration camp for four days, at Agami, and they let us out slowly for interrogation. (8)

This hostile reception in Egypt remained with him all through his stay there, and he, along with other Europeans, formed a circle embracing "writers in exile". Together they edited a magazine, entitled Personal Landscape, to express their views on their estrangement in a different, hostile landscape. In an anthology of the magazine, edited by Robin Fedden, he analyses in his introductory article, "An Anatomy of Exile", the difficulties the European encounters in Egypt:

> First of all there are the difficulties of climate. Egypt was designed for Northern Europeans to visit, not to live in. The winter incontestibly perfect, like an ideal English summer, but when one outstays what was once the tourist season and drags on for three or four years, as is inevitable in war-time, the disadvantages of having no real winter become all too apparent.
>
> The landscape too, though beautiful in its own relaxed way, is as flaccid as the year. Except for the deserts where only the soldiers have lived, it is boneless, and unarticulated. No rock, no gesture on the part of the earth, disturbs the heavy Nilotic mould which is cultivated Egypt ... Flat, alluvial and spineless, the fields turn out their bumper crops month after month: but the northerner turns out nothing. (9)

The argument confirms Durrell's view about the influence of landscape on individuals.

When Durrell was set free from the concentration camp in Cairo in 1941, and while he was still in the Luna Park Hotel waiting for further orders and seeking a job, his Greek friend Theodore Stephanides came to welcome him and introduce him to

the Greek community in Egypt. This was to have an important influence on him and on his attitude to Egypt. Subsequently, Durrell worked in Cairo as a Foreign Press Officer in the British Embassy for almost two years before he was posted to Alexandria in 1944 as a Press Attaché.

During this time his first volume of poems, A Private Country (1943), was published. Though Durrell attempted to write poetry at an early age, he dismissed his earlier poems as mere juvenile attempts. Like a number of poet-novelists who are associated with one form of writing more than the other (for example, Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence), Durrell's fame and popularity rest now on his novels and travel books more than on his poems, though it was originally as a poet that he made an impact.

In this first book of poetry, landscape description predominates over other elements and themes; as Miss Goulianos observes,(10) fifteen poems out of twenty-nine are about landscape, mainly Greek landscape. This led one critic, Derek Stanford, to write of Durrell as early as 1947: "Durrell is the Gauguin of modern poetry, a Gauguin whose Marquesas was an isle of Greece".(11) Stanford hit on the most characteristic features of Durrell's poetry: its description of landscape and the influence of Greece. Besides landscape description, his themes include the intimate relationship between man and woman with an emphasis on the erotic side; Freud's teachings and his psychological interpretations of each action of human behaviour are important influences here. A number of poems are concerned with the impact of the above-mentioned themes on the artist. In

fact, the themes of the poems do not differ greatly from those of his novels. Indeed, while reading his poems, we frequently come across an idea, a character or a description which is rendered more fully, later, in his prose work.

In his poems Durrell is always lurking behind a mask to conceal any private incidents or any personal element; nevertheless, the reader can easily discern some autobiographical elements. His landscape descriptions, for instance, are mainly projections of his own feelings, as they reveal his love of certain places and his dislike of others. "The mortal boy", whom Durrell refers to in his poem "Cities, Plains and People", no doubt relates to himself during his childhood in India. His innocent unawareness of life is described at the beginning of the poem:

> Once in idleness was my beginning,
>
> Night was to the mortal boy
> Innocent of surface like a new mind
> Upon whose edges once he walked
> In idleness, in perfect idleness. (12)

Here the boy is an integral part of the landscape, sharing its idleness. The poet also refers to the Tibetans' "prayer-wheel", and to his early schooling in that part of the world:

> On draughty corridors to Lhasa
> Was my first school. (13)

When the boy was sent to London, he saw

> Death like autumn falls
> On the lakes its sudden forms, on walls
> Where everything is made more marginal
> By the ruling planes of the snow. (14)

His poem "Joss" portrays the birth of an artist in India and his rebirth in Greece. The details of the poem are plainly autobiographical. Searching for the sublime, the poet reaches

Greece, which has a great healing power:

> A second childhood, born again in Greece,
> O the benign power, the providing power
> Is here too with its reassurance honey. (15)

There is a difference, however, when Durrell, the expatriate, describes his native country; the picture is utterly mundane:

> The colonial, the expatriate walking here
> Awkwardly enclosing the commonwealth of his love
> Stoops to this lovely expurgated prose land
> Where winter with its holly locks the schools
> And spring with nature improvises
> With the thrush on ploughland, with the scarecrow. (16)

Durrell's poems about Egypt portray an uncreative artist who is shackled by a dominating landscape. Alexandria was a sort of rehabilitation for him, partly because of its large Greek population at that time. Yet, on the other hand, he hated that part of the city which was purely Egyptian and tried to forget it by indulging himself deeply in Greek life and thought. This was dictated partly by the ancient spirit of place, since Alexandria was originally founded by Alexander the Great, and partly by his Greek friends and the poems of C.P. Cavafy, the Greek Alexandrian poet who spent most of his life in that city.

His correspondence while in Egypt reveals a discontented, resentful person who was forced to stay, impatiently waiting for release. He wrote to Anne Ridler from Cairo in 1942:

> I haven't felt like writing a line to anyone,
> being so dead to the world in this copper-pan
> of a blazing town with its pullulating stinking
> inhabitants - Middle East is Far enough east
> for me. (17)

The same sense of exasperation is expressed in another letter from Alexandria to Diana Gould in March 1944:

> ... Meanwhile we sing your duck song in tragic
> voices Gwyn and I by Mareotis and wonder how
> soon we can get out of this country. (18)

When the war was beginning to come to an end, Durrell wrote to Henry Miller from Alexandria in August 1944:

> Now the war seems to have taken a definite turn and we hope that it will be over in a month or so, I am written down for Greece. I terribly need to recover my sanity a bit - disoriented and bruised a bit still, and haven't seen anything but sand and palms for two years. (19)

Both the war and the instability of his married life (his first wife and daughter departed for Palestine in 1945) added to his depression; but, ironically, it was the experience of these years of his life recorded and transformed in his famous novel about Alexandria that has established his reputation as a novelist.

Leaving Egypt for Rhodes in late 1945, Durrell was able to breath deeply again, and he conveyed his sense of relief in a letter to Miller: "Can't tell you what a feeling of a cloud lifting to get out of Egypt". (20) Durrell worked in Rhodes as a Public Information Officer during the years 1945-1947. How he felt on the island of Rhodes is illustrated in his book Reflections on a Marine Venus, which will be briefly discussed later. While on Rhodes he finished Cefalû (1947), which was later republished as The Dark Labyrinth (1961), the novel he describes apologetically as a "pot boiler".

In 1945, in a letter to Miller, Durrell sums up the novel as,

> a queer cosmological tale about seven modern European tourists who get lost in the labyrinth in Crete where the minotaur has begun to make a comeback. (21)

The novel has affinities with the detective story and is liberal in its use of symbols; for instance, the names of the characters,

such as Campion, Baird, Fearmax, and Virginia, are symbolic. It is described by Durrell as "an extended morality, but written artlessly in the style of a detective story. Guilt, Superstition, The Good Life, all appear as ordinary people".(22) The setting of the novel is a Greek island which stands for re-birth, whereas England stands for death and decay. In The Dark Labyrinth, Durrell wavers between a hilarious entertainer and an heraldic seer.

The year 1947 witnessed yet another important event in Durrell's life: his second marriage, to an Alexandrian Jewess, Eve Cohen, whom he refers to in his correspondence as the dark lady, and who is his model for Justine.

Enjoyment of an ideal place never lasts long for Durrell. He had to leave the isle of Rhodes to join the Foreign Service in Argentina, where he stayed from February 1947 to December 1948. From a letter to Miller in March 1948, we gather his frustration:

> Climatically an inferno and morally the final circle of hell. Everyone with any sensibility is trying to get out of this place, including me. I think I would rather risk the atom bomb than stay on. (23)

The same sense of boredom is echoed in another letter to Mary Hadkinson:

> Argentina is a large flat melancholy and rather superb-looking country full of stale air, blue featureless sierras, and businessmen drinking Coca-Cola. One eats endless beef and is so bored one could scream. It is the most lazy-making climate I have struck: not as bad as Egypt, of course: but I'd give a lifetime of Argentina for three weeks of Greece. (24)

While working in Cordoba, Argentina, as director of the British Council Institute, Durrell gave a series of lectures for the

British Council which were later, in 1952, published as A Key to Modern Poetry, his only published book of criticism.

Durrell's first verse play, Sappho, was written in the late 1940's and published in 1950. The play is written in imitation of the classical tragedies of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides, though it does not aspire to the same tragic level. The main character, Sappho, is taken from history, but both the character and the story are manipulated in a highly personal way.

Durrell worked as an Information Officer with the British Embassy in Belgrade from 1949 to 1952, and it was during 1952 that his second marriage began to break up. His second daughter, Sappho, was born at this time.

From 1953 to 1956 Durrell held the post of Director of Public Relations in Cyprus. His travel book Bitter Lemons, which portrays a critical period in the history of Cyprus prior to independence, was published in 1957. He also published in the same year White Eagles Over Serbia, a children's detective story based on his experiences in Yugoslavia.

At last Durrell decided to leave the Foreign Service and to devote his time completely to writing. So in 1957 he moved to Provence in France and settled in a cottage there with Claude-Marie Vincendon, a French woman whom he met in Alexandria and who later became his third wife. Justine appeared in that year, securing his fame and success both artistically and financially. Balthazar, written in six weeks, was published in 1958; Mountolive, written in twelve weeks, followed in 1958; and Clea,

written in eight weeks, came out in 1960. The four novels constitute The Alexandria Quartet, the tetralogy which made Durrell very popular and elevated him in the eyes of some critics to the status of a major twentieth-century novelist.

As Durrell explains in a note to Balthazar, the first three volumes are to be regarded as siblings, while the last volume, Clea, is a true sequel, since its events occur a little later in time. The characters are set against an exotic background, Alexandria, where a number of interweaving themes are developed throughout the four volumes. There is the eternal subject of love which is the main theme; running parallel are the themes of the growth of the artist and of death in general, with special reference to the effect of place on people's lives. What Durrell forgot to include in his title for the tetralogy is the word Greek before Alexandria; though the setting is Alexandria, the total atmosphere and the final flavour is Greek. As a matter of fact, Durrell first thought of Athens as the setting for his Quartet, but later shifted the action to Alexandria to provide him with more colour. As a Greek-oriented writer, his decision to choose Alexandria was dictated by his love for Greece and by the historical association of Greece and Alexandria. It is true that the founder of the city was a Greek, but Alexandria has long been considered an Egyptian sea-port, not a Greek resort or a Greek colony. For various reasons during his stay in Egypt, Durrell did not mix with the locals. The result was that he could not familiarize himself with the customs and habits of the Egyptians and had to borrow this background material from various sources and books, supplementing the picture with more details from his fertile, but sometimes distorting, imagination. This

would be more acceptable if Durrell did not keep repeating to interviewers and others that the place in his Quartet is real, while the characters are not.

After the success of the Quartet, the first version of Durrell's Collected Poems was published in 1960. It comprised his first volumes of poetry: A Private Country (1943), Cities, Plains and People (1946), On Seeming to Presume (1948), Deus Loci (1950), and The Tree of Idleness (1955). Since 1955 other volumes of poetry have appeared: Selected Poems (1956; another edition 1964), The Ikons and Other Poems (1966); the second edition of his Collected Poems (1968); Vega and Other Poems (1973), which included the poems published in The Red Limbo Lingo (1971), and another Selected Poems (1977). Though Durrell counts his mature poetic career as commencing with the publication of A Private Country, dismissing earlier poetic works as juvenile, the latest and third edition of his Collected Poems: 1931-1974 (1980) includes these earliest items: Quaint Fragment : Poems Written between the Ages of Sixteen and Nineteen (1931); Ten Poems (1932); Ballade of Slow Decay (Christmas, 1932); Transition Poems (1934); and Mass for the Old Year (1935).

Durrell's two other verse plays (Sappho was the first) appeared in the year after the completion of The Alexandria Quartet. An Irish Faustus came out in 1963, and Acte in 1965. As the title of the first of these indicates, the incidents occur in Ireland, Durrell departing from the historical basis of the Faust story. Unlike the famous sixteenth-century German Faust book and Marlowe's great tragic drama, Durrell's An Irish Faustus is a fairy-tale about a magic ring, very much like many children's

fairy stories concerned with a magic ring. In the play, however, instead of making use of the magic ring, Faustus painstakingly burns it to destroy its harmful effect. Mephisto, with a face like Faustus, represents the evil side of him; Faustus himself is the benevolent side. Yet the conflict within the character is never shown; on the contrary, Faustus shows his good will throughout in his determination to get rid of the ring, ignoring worldly temptation. The end of the play, however, is very ambivalent; as Faustus calls on his friend Matthew, Mephisto arrives masked as usual and is accepted by Faustus as a partner in a game of cards. Faustus is depicted as a follower of the white art, not the black art. If Faustus accepts Mephisto in the end it means that he is welcoming his values - that is, the black art. This is inconsistent with the foregoing events and with the character of Faustus.

Durrell has subtitled the play "a morality in nine scenes", considering it a humble contribution to the Faust legend. He explains the "Irishness" thus: "'Because...realizing that I could not leave a pennon on the heights already scaled by Goethe, Lessing and Valéry, not to mention Byron (Manfred), I thought it wiser to stay nearer to Kit Marlowe and dispense with the more classical associations'". (25) But Durrell's Irish Faustus is lightweight in comparison with Marlowe's play.

Durrell's third verse play, Acte, illustrates the conflict between Roman and Scythian values in a sadistic atmosphere. The characters are free adaptations of historical figures. The character or Acte is based on Acte Claudia, a slave-concubine from Asia Minor, who was Nero's mistress until his marriage to

Poppaea. It was believed that Nero loved Acte dearly and even planned to marry her, but was bitterly opposed by his mother Agrippina. Acte remained faithful to him and assisted at his burial in the family tomb of the Domitii after his suicide in A.D. 68. Durrell's Acte is a princess, daughter of King Corvinus of Scythia; and Nero's love for her is casual and childlike. Nero's presence in the play and his relation to Acte serves two main purposes: to reveal the evil side of her character and to justify her tragic death at the end. The play also shows that creators of fiction, even when drawing on historical actuality, do not feel bound by the facts, but feel free to invent imaginary worlds on the basis of the historical record.

When Durrell's wife Claude, died of cancer in 1967, he felt lonely and depressed, and this condition is manifested in his later poems, particularly in Red Limbo Lingo, as well as his later novels.

The Revolt of Aphrodite, Durrell's double-decker work comprising Tunc (1968), and Nunquam (1970), is a mixture of science fiction and far-flung fantasy. Durrell is still haunted by places and his characters move from Athens to France and Turkey; but he decided to avoid descriptions of landscape, set pieces and purple passages, as he revealed to Marc Alyn in an interview. In the same interview Durrell disclosed his object in writing the two volumes of the double-decker.

> What I wanted was to establish right from the start the two time-scale of the narrative: then, which suggests the distortion of the imaginary, and now, which opens the way to reality. Questions on one side, answers on the other. I was determined

> to involve the reader in the circuit, to get him out of his passive role as onlooker by making him the subject of the novel in the second volume, one of the characters. (26)

The main theme is taken from Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West, but Durrell supplements Spengler's prophecies with a few predictions of his own. Felix Charlock, the protagonist and narrator, calls himself "the thinking weed" and has invented "Abel", a talking instrument. He gets entangled with the firm of Merlin's, which is run by two mysterious brothers, Julian and Juan. They promise to propagate his inventions provided that he proves to be loyal to the firm by devoting his mind and time to its demands. Iolanthe is a young Greek prostitute who is mistress to both Felix and Julian and who later becomes a famous film-star of the same name. When she dies, Julian sees to it that a life-like creation of Iolanthe is invented, which with the help of Felix's "Abel" can talk in Iolanthe's real voice, but she behaves like a normal human being in other respects. By the end of Nunquam Felix is able to come out of his passivity and decide to destroy the firm.

Durrell, the eternal husband, married for the fourth time in November 1973, his new wife being a charming French journalist-actress. At this time, he started work on a group of novels he intends to form a quintet. Monsieur (1974), the first movement of his quintet, marks a departure from his Greek absorption, as the main theme concerns the beliefs of the Gnostics. Egypt returns as a setting and Gnosticism is strongly associated with the influential Egyptian character of Akkad who advocates and perpetuates the Gnostic ideas. In the second movement of the quintet, Livia (1978), Durrell's plan for the five novels is

revealed through one of his characters, Aubrey Blanford, a novelist:

> Well, squinting round the curves of futurity I saw something like a quincunx of novels set out in a good classical order. Five Q novels written in a highly elliptical quincunxial style invented for the occasion. Though only dependent on one another as echoes might be, they would not be laid end to end in serial order, like dominoes - but simply belong to the same blood group, five panels for which your creaky old Monsieur would provide simply a cluster of themes to be reworked in the others. (27)

The "highly elliptical quincunxial style" strikes the reader of Livia in particular, as it becomes more concentrated, while the purple passages and the lavishness of descriptions in his Greek books are done away with. So far, only two volumes of the quintet have appeared; the third to come is Constance in Love.

A year before Livia, however, Durrell's lushness of style, something almost inevitable when a Greek subject or theme is discussed, is used to describe the island of Sicily in his travel book Sicilian Carousel (1977). Jan Morris expresses her disappointment with the book for coming short of his former travel books, and considers it "a tired successor to so many pleasures".(28) The fact is that Durrell has attempted to include Sicily with his Greek islands, imposing Greekness on many aspects of Sicilian life. Jan Morris sums up Durrell's attitude extremely well in the following passage:

> Mr. Durrell is a Hellenist, and in his previous Mediterranean writings, Corfu to Alexandria, he has been pursuing his own ideals of, or tastes in, Greekness. He tried to do the same in Sicily, and often succeeded, he assures us, in recapturing the authentic Attic tang, the wistful melody of grove or ruin, that has so long enthralled him. But Sicilian Greekness is, like it or not, residual. It may be, as Mr. Durrell says, that there are pockets of Greek speaking Sicilians still, but

> their culture has long been overwhelmed by waves of Romanness, Arabness, Normanness, Spanishness and Italianity. (29)

The most recent of Durrell's travel books, The Greek Islands, supplies more than travel books usually do. The book crystallizes Durrell's views on the Greek islands; moreover, we enjoy the details as they, incidentally, shed light on some of his obscure poems when he reminisces about different places, giving some autobiographical details.

Durrell's expatriate life and his extensive travels have contributed greatly to the choice of themes and subjects in his literary work, but the place which has had the deepest and most lasting impact on him is Greece, especially the Greek islands. The Greek influence on Durrell will, therefore, be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE GREEK INFLUENCE

Lawrence Durrell has lived in Corfu, Paris, Egypt, Rhodes, Argentina, Yugoslavia, Cyprus and the Midi. Though his writing exhibits the fusion of different cultures, the most conspicuous among them is the Hellenistic. Since the early 1930's Durrell has been absorbing, almost religiously, Greek culture, both ancient and modern. Nine of his twelve novels deal with a Greek subject in one way or another;(1) three of his travel books, Prospero's Cell, Reflections on a Marine Venus, and The Greek Islands, are concerned with Greece; Bitter Lemons concentrates on the Greek aspect of Cyprus; and in Sicilian Carousel he stresses the Greekness of Sicily by visiting the classical sites on the island and invoking their history. It is of great significance that Durrell has been to and lived in many countries but that his travel books deal mainly with the Greek islands. His early and late poems abound with Greek themes; his articles sing of them.

In a nostalgic article about Corfu, "A Landmark Gone",(2) written when he was in Egypt, Durrell expresses his resentment at being forced to leave the Greek island. He reminisces about his daily life there with deep affection and longing. Some of the passages in the article were later transplanted into Prospero's Cell. The article, probably written a year after leaving Corfu, reveals his great love for this Greek island. In "Hellene and Philhellene", an unsigned article published in 1949, Durrell examines a number of classical and modern Greek writers, drawing a sketch of modern Greek literature from 1821 onwards. Durrell

points out the great influence of the Greek classics on English literature, but he also hails the neglected modern Greek writers whom he considers of no less importance than their predecessors. He points out that the cultural discovery of contemporary Greece came about when the later Victorians became interested in modern Greek folk-lore, encouraged by the anthropological works of Sir James Frazer and Sir Edward Tylor. Thus, "the bandages of prejudice and misconception were withdrawn. The classical scholar began to find himself no longer at sea in modern Greece, but very much at home".(3) In the same article Durrell expresses the view that both Cavafy and Palmas are poets of magnitude and force, and that neither of them had yet inspired a translator brave and accomplished enough to render them into English:

> Kavaphis himself was an Alexandrian and his work has some of that calm grace, that exhausted repose which suggest the refinements of the Museum, with more than a touch of orientalism... Some of his work would be considered displeasing by puritans, for much of the subject-matter belongs to the untranslated portions of the Greek anthology. But in no other Greek writer does passionate experience contribute so finely to the structure, the shape, the very grain of what he expresses. In him we find experience completely digested and transmuted. He is not a painter of emotions merely, but a great ironic critic of life... How will it ever be possible to render him in English? (4)

He ends his article by affirming that,

> not only has our Philhellenism undergone a radical change for the better but that the modern Greek has become more than worthy of the admiration that was too often in the past reserved for his ancestors. (5)

This love of Greece has had a great influence on Durrell's writing. The setting for his early novel, Panic Spring, is an imaginary Ionian island, Macrodaphne, owned by Kostas Romanades, a wealthy Greek who has built himself up into a merchant and

financier of international power and importance. Deprived of friendship by the ruthless nature of his career, for even his wife has deserted him, he is lonely despite his success and wealth. So, in order to secure company and conversation, he has fitted up a number of villas, scattered about the island, which he places at the disposal of any guests who show some sign of originality and character. Christopher Marlowe, school-teacher, is stranded in Brindisi by the revolution which has broken out in Greece. In a wine shop he meets Christ, a jovial but mysterious boatman who offers to escort him to the island of Macrodaphne. There Marlowe meets other travellers whose paths have intersected at this remote landfall: Gorden and Walsh; Francis, a painter who is supposed to be researching textile designs in various countries of the Middle East for her English employers; Fonvisin, a Russian physician who has the knack of seducing young peasant girls and telling them eerie stories. All remain as guests of Kostas Romanades. Nevertheless, nothing of consequence takes place. Throughout the spring and summer, the visitors bathe and talk until finally, with the advent of seasonal rains, Romanades dies, and the book ends with the rest of the characters about to depart. The book does illustrate, however, Durrell's idea of Utopian living, because he believes that a Greek island is an ideal place to live on, with nothing to do but eat, bathe and talk.

The setting for The Dark Labyrinth is a Greek island, Crete, and, as the title indicates, its ancient history is invoked with the mention of the labyrinth. The story was suggested by a report about the Greek islands, "The Islands of the Aegean" by the Rev. Henry Fanshawe Tozer, as Durrell discloses in a Note

at the end of the book. The mythological story of the minotaur in the labyrinth is recalled: "There was a peasant legend to the effect that a large animal of some kind lived in the heart of the labyrinth". However, the beast in the labyrinth is seen with different eyes by each of the characters. To Miss Dombey and Fearmax, for example, the minotaur was a fearful beast; Fearmax, therefore, never returns from the labyrinth, and Miss Dombey - who awaits the Second Coming - takes sleeping pills, saying her last prayer in which she asks God why she never believed in Him. The Trumans believe they have seen a gentle cow in the labyrinth. The clue to the mystery is given by Fearmax as he remembers his psychiatrist telling him the reality behind human fears:

> We act our inner symbolism outward into the world. In a very real sense we do create to the world around us since we get it to reflect back our inner symbolism at us. Every man carries a little myth-making machine inside him which operates often without him knowing it. (6)

Durrell's "morality" takes the form of giving each character what he deserves according to his actions and according to his inner projection of the situation. Fearmax is swallowed by the beast and Miss Dombey never comes out of the labyrinth. Mr. and Mrs. Truman, finding themselves in a shut-in fertile plateau from which there is no means of escape, are resigned to their fate when they meet Ruth Adams, an American who has achieved peace of mind in this place. Though Campion and Virginia Dale manage to get out of the labyrinth safely, they meet different fates. Miss Dale can swim out into safety and is able to survive, but Campion, unable to swim, is lost in the ocean.

When the novel was first published as Cefalû in 1947, it

attracted very little attention. It was only after the publication of The Alexandria Quartet that critics looked seriously at the early novel, later republished as The Dark Labyrinth. The novel, intricate as the labyrinth itself, shows his early preoccupation with a Greek subject.

Another early work, Durrell's first outstanding novel, The Black Book, reveals many symptoms of his cult of Greece, most noticeably in his use of symbolism. Throughout the book, Greece and the Levant stand for life and enlightenment, while England stands for death, agony and despair. From "Bivarie" the narrator reports what he observes through his window: "the river god has sent us his offering: mud, in a solid tawny line across the bay".(7) Fertility is associated with the Levant. The narrator, who is on a remote Greek headland, reminisces about his life on the Mediterranean with a sense of loss: "Lost, all lost; the fruiting of green figs, apricots. Lost the grapes, black, yellow, and dusky".(8) Winter, the season chosen for the narrative, proves a good choice "to share that correspondence of death with the season".(9)

In Tunc two cultures are contrasted through the characters and the setting of the novel, which moves from Athens to Turkey. Iolanthe, the Greek prostitute who turns into a famous film-star, is the mistress of the protagonist, Felix, the inventor of "Abel", and also of Julian, one of the brothers who run "the firm". When she dies of cancer, Julian asks Felix to create a life-like mechanical figure of her who would talk and behave exactly like Iolanthe herself. Sometimes Durrell refers to her as "Io", who in Greek mythology is a priestess of Hera at Argos and daughter

of the river god Inachus. Zeus loved her and changed her into a heifer and later he restored her human shape. The association is significant here, as Iolanthe is likewise restored into a human shape after her death, though merely a mechanical robot.

In contrast to the restoring power of Greek culture, Turkey invokes stagnation, disease and death; in an effort to escape, Felix and Sacrapant, after spying on a group of Turks, are helped by a Turk:

> The Charon-like Turk was now urged to carry us away from the place at all speed; but he was typical of his leaden unhurried race, and so we set off at the same funeral pace. (10)

The Turk is described as a representative of his race, and so is the Turkish maid who offers to stay with Felix for three days. Her presence invokes in him all the abhorrent memories of her race:

> All the stagnant beauties, its repellent corners of dirt and disease, the marsh gas thrown off by the rotting corpse of Byzantium - they all coalesced into a significant shape. (11)

Felix considered the place "a wicked place to fall in love with a woman, an unmanning place".(12) The Turks of the Capital seemed to him "opium-ridden, or as if clubbed half insensible".(13) Mr. Sacrapant, the clerk of the firm who meets Felix in Turkey, hides a small scout-knife strapped to his ankle. He explains that in such a country one has to be careful: "In Stamboul, Mr. Charlock, one never knows. But if attacked by a Moslem I would give a good account of myself".(14) A further contrast is made when the steamer carrying Felix approaches Turkey:

> Then away beyond Cape Sunion towards those distant light-houses of sorrow across the waters, memories of Leander, where the Moslem dead await us with an elaborate indifference. Sweet, aquiline and crucial

> rise the stalks of the women's tombs, the soulless women of the Islamic canon. In marble one can see the pointed conciseness of a death which promises no after life - without the placebo of soul or resurrection. (15)

According to Greek mythology, Leander used to swim the Hellespont every night from Abydos to visit his beloved Hero, a priestess of Aphrodite at Sestos. One night he was drowned after a storm put out her guiding light. She then leapt into the sea and also drowned. Contrasted with the immortal story of Hero and Leander are the dead Moslem women, for whom death "promises no afterlife", according to Durrell. This is indicative of his indifference to and ignorance of foreign cultures other than the Greek.

The setting for Durrell's first verse play, Sappho, is a Greek island in ancient times, and the subject is taken from Greek history. The historical Sappho was a Greek lyric poetess, born in the late seventh century B.C. at Eresus, who later lived in Mitylene on the island of Lesbos. Sappho surrounded herself with a group of young girls with whom she had close ties and passionate relationships, and she wrote her lyrical poems about them and her feelings for them. It was from this that the term Lesbian originated. In legend, because of her unrequited love for Phaon, a handsome boatman of Mytilene, Sappho ended her life by leaping into the sea from a cliff on the island of Leucas. Durrell's Sappho has but little of the characteristics of her historical counterpart. Plato in Phaedras refers to her as the tenth Muse: "Some say there are nine muses. So few then?/Sappho of Lesbos makes their number ten".(16) Durrell, ruthlessly, endows her with an irritating stammer and a great obsession about getting old. Neither the lesbian inclination of

the original Sappho nor her legendary suicide for Phaon are introduced in the play. At one point, however, Durrell shows her love for Phaon, the diver, and for his twin brother Pittakos, the General, but at the end of the play her love is transmuted into blind revenge when her son is accidentally killed.

The play is written in imitation of classical Greek tragedy. At one point, when Sappho's tutor, Minos, warns, "Everyone has the right to ruin his life",(17) a similar warning is recalled in Oepidus Rex when Oedipus insists on finding out the truth about his origin. Kreon, Sappho's husband, is another tragic character seeking the truth till he wrongly believes that he has married his own daughter.

Durrell's poems return to the same themes again and again since most of his early poems are about Greece or a Greek subject. In one poem about Corfu, "Carol on Corfu", the poet refers explicitly to the healing power of the island and to the corresponding surroundings:

> This is my medicine: trees speak and doves
> Talk, woods walk: in the pith of the planet
> Is undertone, overtone, status of music: God
> Opens each fent, scent, memory, aftermath
> In the sky and the sod. (18)

Apart from attributing the healing power to Greek surroundings, Durrell is fond of invoking the past and linking it with the present. "On Ithaca Standing" is a typical poem of this type, Ithaca being the Ionian island which was the home of Homer's Odysseus. Durrell reverently associates the present fertility with a miraculous past:

> Tread softly, for here you stand
> On miracle ground, boy,
> A breath would cloud this water of glass,
> Honey, bush, berry and swallow,

This rock, then, is more pastoral than
Arcadia is, Illyria was. (19)

In another poem, "Io", the poet links the past with the present; the common Greek street girl has the same traits as her ancient predecessor. A sense of continuation, of belonging to a great past, still exists in Greece even now:

In the museums you can find her,
Io, the contemporary street-walker all alive
In bronze and leather, spear in hand,
Her hair packed in some slender helm
Like a tall golden hive - (20)

In a poem on the death of the Greek poet Seferis, Durrell, rather than lamenting the death of one dear friend, transcends his feelings to express the tremendous impact of the Greek poet on others, dead or alive:

Yours must have set out like ancient
Colonists, from Delos or from Rhodes,
To dare the sun-gods, found great entrepôts,
Naples or Rio, far from man's known abodes,
To confer the quaint Grecian script on other men;
A new Greek fire ignited by your pen. (21)

His poem "Matapan" reflects a personal experience recorded later in The Greek Islands while he was passing Cape Matapan on his way to Crete and then Egypt, accompanied by his wife and child. The poem, however, is more concerned with impressions left on the poet while visiting the island than with any personal allusion. It expresses a fascination with the natural, uncultivated beauty of the surroundings. At the beginning of the poem the poet heaves a sigh of relief at finally reaching the islands, accompanied by an overwhelming admiration for the unchanging nature of the surrounding landscape:

Unrevisited perhaps forever
Southward from the capes of smoke

Where past and present to the waters are one
And the peninsula's end points out
Three fingers down the night:
On a corridor of darkness a beam
To where the islands, at last, the islands... (22)

His poem "Alexandria" first appeared in 1945, the year Durrell went to Rhodes, and may have been written just before leaving Alexandria. In the poem, Alexandria stands for a prison where the poet is destined to be away from his lover or friends. As the old proverb says, the beauty of the object is in the eye of the behoder, so the inability to see any beauty in the place expresses a personal outlook:

Here at the last cold Pharos between Greece
And all I love, the lights confide
A deeper darkness to the rubbing tide;
Doors shut, and we the living are locked inside
Between the shadows and the thoughts of peace. (23)

In "Mareotis", a beautiful lake near Alexandria, the poet is surrounded by a hostile landscape where the wind "stiffens the reeds and glistening salt", and

...in the ancient roads the wind,
Not subtle, not confiding, touching once again
The melancholy elbow cheek and paper. (24)

A contrasting picture is depicted, however, in "Delos" where islands

like repairing mirrors holding up
Small towns and trees and rivers
To the still air, the lovely air. (25)

The wind here is milder and more creative, turning the windmills and helping the "liver-coloured sails" which "with their long shining keels/Aimed across Delos at a star".(26) Miss Goulianos very aptly describes the association of Greece with healing and of Alexandria with wounding as recurrent themes in Durrell's poetry.(27)

Lake Mareotis in Alexandria is once again referred to in "Petron, the Desert Father", where the general impression we get of the landscape surrounding the lake is of a dull, gloomy and constrained nature. The lake even smells:

> Now dense as clouded urine moved the lake
> Whose waters were to be his ark and fort
> By the harsh creed of water-fowl and snake,
> To the wave-polished stone he laid his ear
> And said: 'I dare not ask for what I hope
> And yet I may not speak of what I fear'. (28)

The Conon poems denote a dualistic personality, for Conon is both the narrator as well as some other person - to maintain a subjective-objective view. The character sketches under the title "Conon the Critic, on the Six Landscape Painters of Greece", though written in prose, are beautifully lyrical, the reason perhaps for their inclusion in his Collected Poems. They are more concerned with landscape than with the painters themselves. Take, for instance, the sketch on Peter of Thebes:

> This landscape is not original in its own mode. First smells were born of resin and pine. Then someone got drunk on arbutus berries. Finally as an explanatory text someone added this red staunch clay and roots. You cannot smell one without tasting the other as with fish and red sauce. (29)

A contrasting picture is given in "Conon in Alexandria", where the first stanza reads:

> Ash-heap of four cultures,
> Bounded by Mareotis, a salt lake,
> On which the winter rain rings and whitens,
> In the waters, stiffens like eyes. (30)

These first four lines carry within them a premonition of dissatisfaction and unease. The four cultures are dying ("ash-heap"); and they are also "bounded" by Mareotis, "a salt lake"; "bounded" conveys a sense of limitation or a prison, while the emphasis on the lake as a salt lake draws attention to its

sterile quality. The falling of winter rain in "rings" and the water which "stiffens like eyes" is an ominous picture. In the same poem, Conon alludes to the place as a prison:

> I have been four years bound here:
> A time for sentences by the tripod:
> Prophecies by those who were born dead,
> Or who lost their character but kept their taste. (31)

In his prison he dreams of going back to the islands: "Surely these nightly visitations/Of islands in one's sleep must soon be over".(32) In his first embryonic version of the poem,(33) published in Middle East Anthology (1946), Durrell refers explicitly to the morbid effect of the place for it "sickened their Greek/Love"(34) and they "turned to politics".(35)

Durrell's Travel Books:

Durrell's love of Greece, its landscape and its people, was the driving force behind his three island books. Though the beauty of the Greek landscape and the fascination of Greek personalities are well-known, Durrell's love and partiality is unusually strong. Ancient Greek history and mythology attracted him and affected his outlook, making him see everything Greek as beautiful. He fell in love with Corfu even before seeing it, through the letters of his friend George Wilkinson who left England to settle there in 1934. Writing to Wilkinson from Bournemouth as early as 1934 and without having visited the island, Durrell tells him that "Corfu is the ideal place to use as a base for Mediterranean exploration".(36) Durrell's brother, Gerlad Durrell, humorously reveals in his book My Family and Other Animals how Lawrence was insisting on leaving England to settle down in Corfu. To Gerald, however, "living in Corfu was rather like living in one of the more flamboyant and slapstick

comic operas".(37)

Travel books are usually shallow; the impressions of a passer-by who is usually an alien. Durrell's island books are different; they are not first impressions but are based on his experiences there, living with people and sharing their life in its various aspects. Fact and fiction are intermingled, however, forming a unified whole; past and present are continuously linked; and characters are both real and mythical.

Prospero's Cell

Shakespeare's play The Tempest provides Durrell with the title of his first island book, about Corfu. If Corfu is not the place Shakespeare really meant in his play, as suggested at the end of Prospero's Cell, it bears a great resemblance to it, in its mythical quality and its fairy-tale atmosphere. The book is intended to be "a guide to the landscape and manners of the island of Corcyra", the early name of Corfu. A quotation from Anthony Sherley's His Persian Adventure introduces its main theme:

> A Greekish isle, and the most pleasant place that ever our eyes beheld for the exercise of a solitary and contemplative life.... In our travels many times, falling into dangers and unpleasant places, this only island would be the place where we would wish ourselves to end our lives. (38)

In 1935 Durrell wrote to Alan G. Thomas from Corfu, expressing his fascination with the place:

> I'd like to tell you how many million smells and sounds and colours this place is, but my stock of superlatives would give out. (39)

In the spring of 1944, Durrell wrote to his friend Henry Miller from Alexandria:

> I've done about half of a little historical book about Corfu, tried writing in the style of a diary - you know the French anecdotal novel type of things. (40)

The book which has the form of a diary, giving a day-to-day impression of Durrell's life on Corfu throughout 1937-38, was written many years later. But as Unterecker rightly observes, the freshness of the book is "the freshness of art rather than of nature".(41) Though Durrell mentions in his dedication that four of the characters included in the book are real, we do not expect them to be true reflections of the persons Durrell really met. Unterecker intelligently perceives that in portraying Count D., Durrell did not include everything about him. In a letter to Miller from Rhodes in the fall of 1945, Durrell wrote:

> Prospero is out.... Too bad you never met the great Zarian or old Dr. Palatioano, a fine mythological old man on whom I modelled the count. He had the skull of his mistress on a velvet square before him on the writing desk; liked holding it up to the light and talking to it. (42)

We never see Count D. speaking to the skull of his mistress in the book. Durrell sometimes makes other characters the mouth-pieces for his own ideas. He quotes Father Nicholas as saying: "What more does a man want than an olive tree, a native island, and a woman from his own place?" After meeting Eve in Egypt, Durrell himself expressed a similar view in a letter to Miller:

> The world has walls of dung really, and the human being a mind like a sponge. The next ten years should see us in full cry over the hills. Simple needs this time. A girl, an olive tree, a typewriter, and a few great friends like you. (43)

Fact and fiction intermingle to such an extent that we cannot draw a dividing line between them. In the hands of Durrell real characters become mythical figures. Ivan Zarian, Theodore Stephanides and Father Nicholas have mythological qualities; the peasant girls "lounge on the hillside - flash of colour like a bird - with a flower between their teeth";(44) Helen, wife of Anastasius, has hair "like the wing of a raven",(45) and "their daughters are called Sky and Freedom".(46) St. Spiridion, the island saint, is still awake after nearly two thousand years on earth. He is the "Influence of the island", and "to use his name in an oath is to bind yourself by the most solemn of vows".(47) Some fragments from "a novel on Corcyra" have a legendary flavour: "She comes down through the cloud of almond-trees like a sentence of death, all dressed in white and leading her flock to the very gates of the underworld".(48) The son of Luke, the blind guitarist, has the face of a "Byzantine ikon". The love story of the Albanian Moslem and the Greek girl has a romantic, legendary touch in it.

Durrell renders everyday life as a dream world of fantasy:

> We breakfast at sunrise after a bathe. Grapes and Hymettos honey, black coffee, eggs and the light clear-tasting Papastratos cigarette. Unconscious transition from the balcony to the rock outside. Lazily we unhook the rowboat and make for the point where the still blue sea is twisted in a single fold - like a curtain caught by a passing hand. A shale beach, eaten out of the cliff-point, falling to a row of sunken rocks. A huge squat fig-tree poised like a crocodile on the edge of the water. (49)

In the chapter entitled "History and Conjecture", Durrell emphasizes the mythological quality of the place:

> In this landscape observed objects will retain a kind of mythological form - so that though chronologically we are separated from Ulysses by

> hundreds of years in time, yet we dwell
> in his shadow. (50)

There is also a beautiful, exaggerated description of a brigantine, where Durrell uses hyperbole to convey the desired effect:

> Yesterday we awoke to find an Aegean brigantine anchored in the bay. She wore the name Saint Barbara and two lovely big Aegean eyes painted on her prow with the legend Θεὸς ὁ Δίκαιος ('God the Just'). The reflected eyes started up at her from the lucent waters of the lagoon.... She had strayed out of the world of dazzling white windmills and grey, uncultured rock; out of the bareness and dazzle of the blinding Aegean into our seventeenth century Venetian richness. She had strayed from the world of Platonic forms into the world of Decoration. (51)

Olive trees provide Durrell with a good subject for numerous variations in the chapter, "Landscape with Olive Trees":

> The olive in Corcyra is the smallholder's pride, and in the wooded parts of the island land values are usually computed on the basis of the number of olive-trees. (52)

Durrell is fascinated by olive trees, and his sensitivity to minute detail makes his treatment of this subject intriguing. As olives are important to Greek life, so are wine and water. Durrell reveals that he has become as great a connoisseur of water as he is of wine:

> Clear and cold, the water plays with the regularity of a clock. It is the sweetest of the island waters, because it tastes of nothing but the warm afternoon, the breath of the cicadas, the idle winds crisping at little corners of the inert sea. (53)

Like a magician Durrell can create in a twinkling of an eye a dazzlingly vivid picture. In the episode when Theodore, intoxicated by the rhythm and the dance of the Gastouri girl, finally joins the dance, Durrell enhances the picture by giving

different dimensions to it:

> A policeman absently fires his pistol in the air for the sheer fun of it. A donkey breaks loose and ambles through the crowd with two small shrieking children in the panniers on its back. One of the monks mounts it and drives it back to the trees with shrill cries. A fresh round of wine appears from nowhere and gruff healths ring out, mingled with belches. (54)

Forced to leave Greece for Alexandria, Durrell's eyes cannot forget the Ionian or see the beauty of Alexandria. Thus Alexandria's famous Pharos becomes "the sightless Pharos" which "turns its blind eye upon a coast, featureless, level and sandy". He remembers the Ionian with nostalgia:

> Here we miss Greece as a living body; a landscape lying up close against the sky, suspended on the blue lion-pads of mountains. And above all, we miss the Eye: for the summers of indolence and deduction on the northern beaches of our island - beaches incessantly washed and sponged by the green Ionian - taught us that Greece was not a country but a living eye. (55)

He recalls how reluctantly and sadly they had to leave Corfu because of the war:

> The day war was declared we stood on the balcony of the white house in a green rain falling straight down out of heaven on the glassy floor of the lagoon; we were destroying papers and books, packing clothes, emptying cupboards, both absorbed in the inner heart of the dark crystal, and as yet not conscious of separation. (56)

Reflections on a Marine Venus

Durrell's second island book is about Rhodes, the "Marine Venus", recording the time when he was living there after leaving Alexandria. He, at once, introduces the main theme of the book when he discusses the word "Islomania" as a kind of disease, and he himself as one who has caught it:

> This book is by intention a sort of anatomy of islomania, with all its formal defects of inconsequence and shapelessness: of conversations begun and left hanging in the air: of journeys planned and never undertaken: of notes and studies put together against books unwritten....It is to be dedicated to the resident goddess of a Greek island - Rhodes. (57)

We are supposed to forgive the book's formal defects and welcome any extravaganza as long as it is an expression of love for Rhodes, since he writes about the island as an "islomane". Durrell's companions on the island are introduced on the second page, each with his most characteristic feature:

> Gideon with his monocle screwed in sitting soberly before a bottle of mastika; Hoyle winding his enormous watch; Mills talking; Sand sucking his pipe; Egon Huber walking the deserted beaches hunting for scraps of wood to carve; and the dark-eyed E, whose shadow is somehow spread over all these - a familiar, a critic, a lover - E putting on a flowered frock in the studio mirror with her black hair ruffled. (58)

Durrell recalls the time he first met Gideon on a vessel coming to Rhodes from Alexandria "after some years, of exile", leaving E, his "only tie" with Egypt, to follow him in a few weeks. Exhausted on board the ship and longing to be back in Greece, a strong nostalgic feeling overcomes him:

> Forgotten scenes came into my mind, without form of coherence, yet bathed in the sunny lambency of the Greek past, and even in my sleep I felt something like the absurd disposition to tears with which I last saw the shores of Crete fade into the mists of 1941. (59)

As soon as they arrived at Rhodes and while passing through a street lined with rustling trees, Durrell "broke a leaf off and crumpled it in my fingers to inhale the sweet odour of eucalyptus oil".(60)

Due to bad weather E was forced to stay for a week in Carpathos. Durrell's reaction and comments are significant:

> After Egypt with its swarming vermin, its population of Apes in nightgowns, its dirt, disease, and truncated beggars on trolleys, Carpathos must have seemed preciously close to Paradise in this spring weather. (61)

A little later, however, he says of E that "being an Alexandrian she speaks fairly good Greek, and so found herself at home". To Durrell, Alexandria does not really belong to Egypt. It is more of a Greek city and its inhabitants are more civilized than the Egyptian "apes in nightgowns", so that it is natural for them to speak Greek!

As both modern and ancient aspects of Greek life attract Durrell, he is continuously interfusing the two sides:

> I am told by Hoyle that in parts of the island a rainbow is known as Helen's cord because, say the peasants, a great queen hanged herself with a rainbow from a tree ... According to one ancient source when Troy fell Helen was driven out by her step-sons and took refuge in Rhodes where Polyxo hanged her from a tree to avenge the death of Tlepolemos in the Trojan war. (62)

On the other hand, Durrell's indifference to the Turkish community in Rhodes is apparent in his inability to understand the real motives behind their actions, or to analyse them diligently. A misunderstanding of the Turkish children makes him blame Islam for their behaviour: "In a moment all the horrors of Egypt rise to mind: the suffocating beastliness of Islam and all it stands for, bigotry, cruelty and ignorance".(63) Even so, in Rhodes it has become different: "Rhodes has converted Islam and made it part of the island's green and gentle self".(64)

Visiting a number of Greek islands, Durrell gives us the flavour of each as he felt it. Symi "lies like a black rusk

upon the water - but rock so pitted and perforated by the tongues of sea thrown out by Anatolia that you would think of it as most like some black stone lung";(65) Kalyminos is the island in which "the infant's paint-box has been at work again on the milky slopes of the mountain ... it has squared in a churchyard, a monastery, and lower down repeated the motif: a church, a monastery, a town";(66) Cos is "the spoiled child of the group ... an island that does not bother to comb its hair";(67) Leros is "a beastly island without any character";(68) and at Patmos they were overwhelmed by the Abbot's generosity.

"The Sunny Colossus" chapter abounds with historical and legendary facts about the creation of the fabulous bronze statue of Colossus, its collapse by an earthquake, and the Rhodians' inability to reconstruct it because the "Oracle of Delphi" pronounced against the idea. Rhodes is frequently associated with historical figures:

> Legend states that when Pompey visited the island he patiently heard all the resident sophists and presented each with a talent as a mark of his esteem ... Brutus and Cassius both studied rhetoric in Rhodes. (69)

Some nostalgic reminiscences about the days he spent in his house in Rhodes, the friends he used to meet there, and their long arguments are described in the chapter, "In the Garden of the Villa Cleobus". Durrell recalls how he used to have a dip in the cold sea in the early morning before breakfast, how the Mufti used to come for a cup of Turkish coffee in the morning; and also the superstitious servant girl who comes from Cos and who shares all the superstitions of her people. He

shows how essential it is for a village to have a saint and he compares a village without an ikon to a head without an eye:

> a journey by water may be dedicated to the protection of the saint, just as an illness may be placed, so to speak, on his knees. He is a help against the brute adversities that face simple folk in these islands ... One's precious male child is dedicated to him ... Oaths both good and bad are uttered in his name; while no material object is too small to command to his care - a sick child, a sickly lamb, or a tattered fishing net. (70)

Bitter Lemons

In Bitter Lemons, Durrell recalls the years from 1953 to 1956, which were critical years in the history of Cyprus. It is the most perfect of the three island books in its well-knit structure and its easy flow of episodes. By the time he wrote it, Durrell was mastering the Greek language, and was in complete harmony with the natives. From the very beginning the reader does not expect him to state things as they are or as they were; instead facts are going to be processed through the artist's imagination to be presented to us in a different mould. We expect a subjective point of view rather than an objective detached one. In his preface to the book he states its nature: "This is not a political book, but simply a somewhat impressionistic study of the moods and atmospheres of Cyprus during the troubled years 1953-6".(71)

Durrell's encounter with an Italian in Venice shows their different opinions concerning Cyprus, just before the latter grasps the real situation and starts seeing Cyprus with Durrell's eyes:

> At once it became fertile, full of goddesses and mineral springs; ancient castles and monasteries; fruit and grain and verdant grasslands; priests and gypsies and brigands. (72)

As soon as the ship leaves Venice for Cyprus, the journey, both outward and inward, begins by recalling the last Queen of Cyprus, Catherine Cornaro, dying in exile; remembering the great brave soldier Bragadino, who fought against the Turkish general Mustafa. He remembers Mrs Lewis' book on Cyprus, A Lady's Impressions of Cyprus, which "has left a spirited and observant record of life on the island when British suzerainty was only a few years old".(73) As for Rimbaud's reminiscences of the island, the French poet's "two brief visits have left us a few whining references to the heat and the cold that is all".(74) A pageant of the history of Cyprus flashes through his mind: "Saint Paul received a well-merited thrashing there at the hands of the Paphiots. Antony gave the island to Cleopatra as a gift".(75)

Durrell's mastery of the Greek language was like a magic key touching the people's hearts and paving his way on the island, as his willingness to know people made him many friends. We see how Father Basil treated him when he discovered that he could speak Greek. We discern a change over the driver, Father Basil's cousin, who seemed haughty and unapproachable at first, but when he noticed a volume of Greek folk-songs among Durrell's books "he suddenly turned into a well-educated and not unhandsome young man, full of an amiable politeness".(76) His immediate involvement as soon as he set foot on Kyrenia, was symbolized by his partaking of wine and discussing politics, the two most important aspects of Cypriot life.

As Durrell was holding various kinds of jobs on the island he was able to see Cyprus from different angles and tried to reveal them through characters and episodes. He wished to experience the feeling of the place through its people rather than through the landscape - "to enjoy the sensation of sharing a common life with the humble villagers of the place".(77) He became a close friend of Panos, a school master: "Every evening we took a glass of sweet, heavy Commanderia on his little terrace, before walking down the tiny winding lanes to the harbour in order to watch the sunset melt".(78) Panos introduced him to his friends from different walks of life: the harbourmaster, the bookseller, the grocer, and so on. He remembers the days he spent with Panos with great affection:

> With him I spent three winters snowed up on Troodos, teaching in a village school so cold that the children's teeth chattered as they wrote; with him I panted and sweated in the ferocious August heat of the plains; suffered from malaria at Larnaca, spent holidays among the rolling vineyards of Paphos in search of vines to transport. (79)

Yet Panos' world was insufficient for Durrell because it represented a world of the quiet scholar of means in a small village. He wanted to penetrate deeply into Cypriot life, to "canvass its values at a humbler level".(80)

Durrell became friendly with the workers who came to reconstruct his house. These, among others, were his first historians of Cyprus "each adding a piece of the common fund of knowledge about Cyprus which belongs to the large vague, jig-saw which Panos had established for me".(81)

During the political crisis in Cyprus he was summoned to the British Consulate in Athens and London for consultation. On

leaving Cyprus he realized how much he had loved the place: "I had come to love Cyprus very much by now, I realized, even its ugliness, its untidy sprawling vistas of dust and damp cloud, its hideous incongruities".(82) Seeing Athens after a long absence, she seemed "beautiful still, as a woman who has had her face lifted may still be beautiful".(83) While the most striking feature he recalled of London was its bad, foggy weather: "London, with its drooping grey mist ... awaited me".(84)

Sicilian Carousel

Durrell's least celebrated travel book, Sicilian Carousel, his painstaking yet mainly futile attempts to present a Greek Sicily, has not won the same appreciation as his other travel books. Historically, Sicily has received peoples from every coast in the Mediterranean. The Encyclopaedia Britannica informs us that according to archaeologists, anthropologists, philologists, and historians, the peoples living there in the remotest times, the Sicani, were of Mediterranean origin. Then the Siculi came down the Italian peninsula to Sicily from the central and eastern Alps. But as early as the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age, these inhabitants appear to have been invaded by Greek pirates. Later, between the eighth and sixth centuries B.C., migrations from Greece seem to have been more frequent. But, at about the same time, the Carthaginians, Semites from the North African coast, set up some of their trading posts along the Western Coast of Sicily. From Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia came the Moslems, who took only eighty years to conquer Sicily, settling mainly in the northern regions, while the Berbers were more predominant in the South. Around the year 1000

the Normans arrived and held the island for more than a century. The Aragonese also governed Sicily for more than a century.

Durrell evades the mixed history of the island of Sicily and dwells admiringly on the Greek sites, hardly touching on other influences. He introduces an imaginary friend, Martine, who is dead by the time he visits the island, but whose letters are kept with him while frequenting the different sites. He keeps quoting from these letters till he burns them at the end, once they have fulfilled their purpose. Martine's letters recall Leila's letters to Mountolive in The Alexandria Quartet urging him to visit certain places. Here, for instance, is Martine's letter to Durrell enticing him to visit Sicily, which he gives as one of the reasons for visiting the island:

> You are supposed to be somewhat of an authority on Mediterranean islands - yet you neglect the biggest and most beautiful! Why? (85)

His reason for not visiting Sicily before now is his "old slavish habit of procrastination". Durrell mentions, however, the main reason behind his visit:

> There were of course other strands woven into the skein, like the repeated invitations from an editor in New York to consider some long travel articles on the island. (86)

As advised by his travel agent, Durrell takes the Sicilian Carousel trip, a week's visit to the attractive tourist sites on Sicily. Unlike his other travel books, Sicilian Carousel depends heavily on his fleeting impressions, shallow arguments, and an evasion of the facts. It seems, as one critic suggested, that Durrell's god had forsaken him when he was writing this book. Martine's imaginary letters, however, are of great assistance to him as something to lurk behind:

> Well, I had brought with me a few of those long amusing and tender letters to look over as we voyaged; almost all that I knew of Sicily today came from them. (87)

If this piece of information were true, the Sicilian Carousel trip would add very little indeed. Martine's letters, however, stand in sharp contrast with the mundane descriptions of Italian Sicily.

Durrell characteristically turns into a fluent enthusiastic advocator when the subject is Greek, but becomes elusive and uninterested when it is otherwise. Here he describes a Sicilian road which leads to a Greek site:

> The old road turns inwards upon itself and slopes away towards Lentini and Carlentini whence a brutally dusty and bumpy road leads us onwards into the hills to draw rein at our first Greek site - a resurrected city not unlike Cameirus in Rhodes, but nowhere near as beautiful. What landscape-tasters the ancient Greeks were! (88)

Durrell records dissatisfaction with Italian cuisine all through the book, but that does not lessen his enjoyment of a Greek relic:

> we munched our stale pizzas and drank heartening draughts of Chianti; it was a memory touched off by the fact that here, like in Cyprus, we were seated on the hot time-worn stones of a vanished Greek civilization. (89)

Through one of Martine's letters, Durrell regrets that the language spoken there is no longer Greek, a fact he cannot deny; but still the letter reiterates the Greekness of Sicily:

> The question of Greekness - and the diaspora - is an intriguing one to think about. If we take Athens (that very first olive tree) as the centre from which all Greekness radiates outward ... Sicily is about like Smyrna is - if one takes its pulse today. (90)

It seems that Durrell did not have much to say about Sicily, and what he did was not very interesting. He interleaved his information with a few dull poems and endless talk about any Greek subject - an olive tree, for instance:

> The hardness of the tree is proverbial, it seems to live without water, though it responds readily to moisture and to fertiliser when available. But it will stand heat to an astonishing degree and keep the beauty of its grey-silver leaf. The root of the tree is a huge grenade - its proportions astonish those who see dead trees being extracted like huge molars. (91)

This is an extract from a long digression on the olive tree. When he has finished with the olives and the Greek themes, and after making use of Martine's letters, he burns them, as she had desired, on a deserted beach near Messina and scatters the ashes.

The Greek Islands

Durrell's recent travel book on Greece, The Greek Islands (1978), abounds with factual information for the traveller to these islands but it has also a poetic touch, being written by a "philhellene". Durrell writes as an expert in tourism recommending visits to certain places and warning against others, advising the traveller on what he needs to bring along with him for a fuller enjoyment. He writes with ease as a person who has absorbed the Greek customs and cultures. The minute details he gives in his book about ancient and modern Greeks and Greek sites reveal his deep fascination with the subject.

In his Preface to the book, Durrell explains his purpose in writing it:

> The idea was not to compete in this field,

> but simply to endeavour to answer two questions. What would you have been glad to know when you were on the spot? What would you feel sorry to have missed while you were there? A guide, yes, but a very personal one. (92)

Though the book is based on facts, these facts are tinged with a very personal admiration and the love of a philhellene. He begins with Corfu when the traveller arrives at Brindisi at nightfall and will probably head for a dinner and a bath, for the old 'internazionale' where nothing has really changed since the epoch of Mussolini - the menu least of all. Durrell flavours his guide's information with a number of quotations from recorded history, as when he quotes from Polyaenus who gave a description of young Alexander coming upon an inscription concerning Queen Semiramis; in like manner the traveller might come across something similar.

Durrell warns us that a fondness for mythology and folklore is perhaps a handicap when one visits classical sites for they might not be as beautiful as they are described in Greek mythology. Nevertheless, he does not follow his own prescription, for his information about the actual sites of today is frequently accompanied by a fascinating legendary background to whet our appetite. The history of the island of Corfu - both ancient and modern - is given in some detail. Durrell alludes to the anecdote mentioned in Plutarch's The Moralia about Paxos to tinge the island with a mythological sense:

> A ship carrying both freight and many passengers found itself becalmed off Paxos, with night falling. Everyone was awake, and many were lingering over their dinner. Suddenly they all heard a voice coming vaguely from the direction of Paxos, which called upon the ship's pilot, one Thamus, an Egyptian. He was called twice, but he did not answer, presumably disbelieving his ears; the

> third time he was told in a louder voice:
> 'when the ship comes opposite Palodes you
> must announce the death of the Great God Pan'.
> At first Thamus thought he would not do it;
> he would sail right past Palodes. But there
> they lay, becalmed, and finally at the indicated
> spot he shouted out the news, at which a great
> wail of lamentation arose out of the sea. (93)

As to the little island of Lefkas, Durrell agrees that it has little to interest the modern traveller. Nevertheless, this statement is qualified for he goes on to say that, whatever the island's limitations are, it has one feature which commands the attention of the world - "the white cliffs from which the poetess Sappho made her ill-fated leap into eternity".(94)

Durrell provides some information about modern history, but this is soon submerged in ancient history. For example, he reports the fact that Crete joined the Republic of Greece as late as 1913, though the last Turkish soldier had left the island in 1896, but then he lapses into the past:

> [illegible] to the Legend, the [illegible] Crete, Phoenix was the son of Zeus and Europa, who,
> after getting rid of his brother Sarpedon,
> obtained the throne of Crete with the help of
> Poseidon ... His wife Pasiphae was the daughter
> of the Sun, and the children she bore him were
> called Androgynous, Ariadne and Phaedra. (95)

It was in Crete that Zeus was born, in a cave which the traveller is enticed to visit today, being told to remember how Zeus was 'honeyed into boyhood by two nymphs, daughters of the then king'.(96)

Durrell frequently uses understatement to convey a hyperbolical effect. The following passage is an example:

> Cythera marks the halfway point between the
> mainland and Crete and, during the long centuries
> before steam, almost everything either touched it
> or passed close in, using the island as a convenient
> lee against the swing of the main deep, or a shield
> against the wind. Yes, that is all, except for one
> singular and arresting fact, namely that Aphrodite
> was apparently born here... She hovered somewhere
> between the impossible and the inevitable. (97)

The legend of the lovely Aphrodite is probed. Durrell describes in some detail her erotic relations with her mortal lover, the Trojan Anchises, whom she seduces and persuades to marry her, but Durrell does not refer to the fact that she was notoriously unfaithful. "Speechless with amazement", Anchises "led her to his rough cot, which however contained a comfortable bed covered with the skins of lions and bears".(98) She promised him "a son like a god", who proved to be the pious Aeneas.

The reader is taken to the Corfu Museum to see the Medusa, "the mother of the Gorgons", whose statue evokes a number of conflicting myths. Her "insane grin, the bulging eyes, the hissing ringlets of snake-like hair, the spatulate tongue stuck out as far as it will go"(99) remind us of her legend. She was notorious for turning men to stone if they gazed on her; Perseus was said to have murdered her ritually. Medusa is the second warden of Corfu, and her existence provides an insight into the nature of the ancient Greek world which one encounters as Durrell moves on among the islands. He believes that the Medusa would be better interpreted in terms of Indian yogic thought. She actually bears a great resemblance to Buddha. Though the book is based on facts, Durrell seems to be wilfully entangled in the labyrinth of mythology. In Corfu, Durrell invites the tourist to relive the arrival of Odysseus there. The first sea battle in the history of ancient Greece took place between the Corinthians who had settled in Corfu and the Corfiots themselves. He suggests that perhaps Corfu is the site which Shakespeare chose for his last play The Tempest: "Is not 'Sycorax' an anagram for Corcyra - the ancient name of Corfu?"(100) he exclaims.

The guide book contains some pieces of advice to the would-be traveller. He is advised not to take a camera for the photos one buys are far better than any he can take; instead he should bring a pair of binoculars which would be useful. The book includes a linguistic lesson on the Greek language giving the Greek names for some essential words, though knowledge of the Greek language is mentioned as a first priority. He advises the camping traveller in Crete to beware of the huge number of caterpillars whose untidy web-like nets can be seen in the branches, and whose hairs are highly irritating to the skin and can indeed cause blindness. The traveller should visit St. Spiridion's shrine and "kiss the sacred slipper" and "light a candle ... as he utters a prayer".(101)

The factual information is flavoured with poetic quotations from classical as well as modern writers who have written about the Greek islands or Greek mythology. Durrell's report on "Ithaca" is accompanied by C.P. Cavafy's poem describing the island:

> As you set off for Ithaca
> Pray that your road will be a long one,
> Full of adventures and discoveries. (102)

As for Lesbos, Plutarch has told us how famous the island was already in antiquity both for its musicians and for its poets.

> The musical tradition was emphasized in mystical fashion by the fact that here the singing head of Orpheus was washed up and recovered after the Bacchantes had tossed it into the River Hebros... Terpander of Lesbos was the first to string the lyre with seven strings. (103)

Sappho, the poetess, whom Plato called the Tenth Muse, came from Lesbos. How much was she goddess and how much poet? - We do not know, though she was considered as a muse and earth

representative of Aphrodite. She was sensuous, but "the suggestions of lesbian predispositions and illicit loves"(104) came later from Ovid who also mentions that she "lost her taste for girls by falling in love with a man".(105) Sappho followed her lover, Phaon, through the islands, and when he refused her love and left her she jumped from the White Cliff in Lefkas to her death. She would have been about fifty, for in a fragment she mentions her wrinkles and the fact that she is past the age of child-bearing. In his play Sappho, Durrell alludes to Sappho's main characteristics but stresses the flaws in her character for dramatic purpose.

Durrell ends the book by fragrant notes on "Flowers and Festivals of the Greek Island", which remind us of similar notes in his travel book Reflections on a Marine Venus, under the title of "A Short Calendar of Flowers and Saints for Rhodes". A detailed monthly calendar is kept, ennumerating various kinds of flowers and fruit and different plantations, the minute details showing a profound interest on the part of the writer in his subject. In another context, however, Durrell mentions the fact that it is uncommon among writers to know much about the variety of flowers and birds. They have to look up reference books for more details. The detailed account given by Durrell is taken, doubtless, directly from other sources and then, spiced with some folkloric beliefs, given to the reader. Take for instance the birds and flowers calendar for the month of March:

> Now, in the more southern islands,
> the first cicadas begin to welcome
> the sunlight, and swallows start
> building under the house-eaves.
> (Destroy their nests and you'll

> get freckles, says popular legend. According to another superstition, there will be a death in the house). On the first of the month the boys fashion a wooden swallow, adorn it with flowers and travel from house to house collecting pennies and singing a little song which varies from place to place in Greece. (106)

All the above examples are chosen to reveal how greatly Durrell has been influenced by Greek culture and thought, how much he feels at home with any Greek subject, and how he can go into the minutest detail in describing it. On the other hand, he approaches any other culture, including the English, with trepidation and suspicion. His strongest distaste goes, however, towards orientals whom he misunderstands and often regards with contempt. The next chapter will attempt to show the other side of the story: Durrell's reaction towards orientals and the influence of orientalism on his vision.

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCE OF ORIENTALISM ON DURRELL'S VISION

This chapter examines Durrell's handling of place in his Alexandria Quartet, which is still considered his magnum opus in the field of creative writing. The chapter is, in effect, an attempt to refute Durrell's claim, along with the critics who have supported him, that Alexandria as portrayed in the Quartet does exist as a real tangible place and not as an imaginary one. The city of Alexandria provides the principal setting for the four novels constituting the Quartet; against this background characters act and interact, and incidents unfold and are re-examined through Durrell's four dimensional structure. Durrell claims that, though the characters do not stand for real individuals in life, he is giving a true and real picture of Alexandria during the 1930's and the early 1940's. In his Note to Justine he affirms this point:

> The characters in this story, the first of a group, are all inventions together with the personality of the narrator, and bear no resemblance to living persons. Only the city is real. (1)

The same idea is reiterated in the second volume of the Quartet when, at the very beginning, Balthazar asks Darley about the Justine manuscript: "Was your object poetry or fact? ... if the latter, then there are certain things which you have a right to know".(2) As Darley accepts Balthazar's offer, he gives the impression that he is looking for factual details. This led one critic to examine "Darley's search for truth in The Alexandria Quartet".(3)

In a Note to Balthazar, however, Durrell refers to the

imaginary aspect of the city:

> The characters and situations in this novel, the second of a group - a sibling, not a sequel to Justine - are entirely imaginary, as is the personality of the narrator. Nor could the city be less unreal. (4)

Visiting Egypt after more than thirty years of leaving it, Durrell was asked whether he still considered his representation of Alexandria to have been without exaggeration. He replied:

> My book is fifteen years old and I can't remember where I was telling lies or where the scene was wrong, or whether I was horse-bending. But there is one thing, my worst critics always accuse me of being over-dramatic and overpainting and overwriting my scenes ... Now I am very reassured, I can face them, I can look them in the eye and say I was not exaggerating; Egypt is more dramatic, more extravagant and more colourful than I could do even if I use all the words in the English language. (5)

In another interview about the same time and published in The Egyptian Gazette, he told Ramez el Halawany:

> I've been accused of overwriting. I am glad to say that my books pale beside reality. My visit has reassured me of that. (6)

Durrell means, then, that all the exotic description in the Quartet is trueor perhaps comes short of reality; but in the same interview he seems to contradict himself. Halawany asks him to reply to the accusation that he has "portrayed only one aspect of Egypt - the foreign side", whereas Egypt as most Egyptians see it is not present in his novels. Durrell's answer is:

> I'm not interested in taking snapshots. Nor do I go in for sociological analyses ... I am a romancer. (7)

Is Durrell contradicting himself then? As a matter of fact, there are two Alexandrias depicted in the Quartet: the first is the cosmopolitan seaport founded by Alexander the Great and inhabited, mostly, by Europeans; the other, given much less importance, is the down-to-earth, mundane ordinary Arab city seen through an orientalist's eyes. In one passage, when Darley quotes from the diary of Justine, the two aspects are strongly illustrated:

> Money falling into the thin bowls of beggars. Fragments of every language - Armenian, Greek, Amharic, Moroccan Arabic; Jews from Asia Minor, Pontus, Georgia: mothers born in Greek settlements on the Black Sea; communities cut down like the branches of trees, lacking a parent body, dreaming of Eden. (8)

The passage sums up the two diverse aspects of the city; the beggars represent the local people who are poverty-stricken and who are begging the kindness and generosity of the cosmopolitan society represented in the multi-lingual fragments they leave behind. Both aspects, however, are far from being true reflections of reality. This issue has aroused a great controversy among critics: there are those who have attempted to defend Durrell's representation as accurate and truthful, basing their argument on their own personal experience in that "exotic" place; and there are others who have seen the Alexandria of the novel as an imaginary place created by Durrell. Generally speaking, most critics of the Quartet deal only with one aspect, either severely criticizing or strongly complimenting Durrell's work on these grounds.

So Durrell's Alexandria has both won the acclaim and fired the wrath of critics, with the consequence that it remains a

controversial topic. The crux of the matter is that Durrell has created two levels of the city: at one level Alexandria is the civilized, Westernized city created and inhabited by Europeans; at another, lower, level the same city is a dirty "Arab-smudged" mundane locality whose inhabitants, the Egyptians or Arabs, stand in contrast to the European community. The dichotomy is due to the Western view known as orientalism, in which the orient is depicted as essentially exotic, primitive, pagan and degraded, in sharp contrast to an extremely civilized urban and sophisticated Western society. By adhering to such conceptions, Durrell has been presenting an oriental Alexandria, an Alexandria which would appeal to the West, a city created by the overwhelming influence of orientalists on Durrell. From his exposition of the two levels, Durrell seems to adopt and condone the Western view expressed by many orientalists in their writings about the East with an eye on the exotic, and who sharply distinguish between the East and the West, not only through the cultural or social background, but also in the mores of individuals, in their symptomatic attitude to life. These exaggerated details, however, reveal his misunderstanding, not unlike the majority of orientalists, of Egyptian culture and religion, however realistic he claims his views to be.

Commenting on the Western attitude towards the East (Near and Far), Edward Said explains in his book Orientalism:

> The Orient was almost a European invention,
> and had been since antiquity a place of romance,
> exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes,
> remarkable experiences. (9)

The exotic nature of the Quartet is much more appreciated and accepted by the European and Western reader and critic,

since Alexandria provides its background and therefore can afford any bizarre description. De Mott likens Durrell to the Emanglons who have a passion for remoteness in art; but his exclamatory question: "What but remoteness could be expected in a work set in Egypt?"(10) reveals his acceptance of Durrell's views concerning the place. Another critic, Gilbert Highet, strongly approves of Durrell's narrative, claiming that the city, along with its inhabitants, is capable of containing two extremes:

> Alexandria is a small Paris set on the central sea; but also, by tradition and infection, it is a city of the hot, intricate corrupt Middle East. (11)

Rhoda Amine, a Scot who went to Egypt in the 1950's to work as a teacher, sums up in her book, Seven Years in the Sun (1959), the attitude of a European when visiting such countries. She has regretted her initial hasty comments on the place and the inhabitants, attributing her initial judgment to her expectations from such an Oriental spot. After a deeper participation in local life, she was able to revalue her previous views. She wrote:

> The romantic "how picturesque!" attitude sometimes contains unconscious condescension and contempt, a detached and curious, but unsympathetic attitude to fellow human beings. I was guilty of it during my first years in Cairo, when I wrote home about the "sunny stuccoed slums"; I was in search of quaintness, of the strange, exotic and bizarre. (12)

This search for "quaintness, ... the strange, exotic and bizarre", to the exclusion of anything else, seems to be the attitude of most Western or European visitors to the East. This was exactly Durrell's attitude when he revisited Egypt in November 1977. In an article written for The New York Times

Magazine, Durrell has given a blown-up, unreliable description of the market-place:

> The great souk, the Grand Bazaar, so to speak, still exercises its romantic charm, still swarms with the old inhabitants of Cairo - beggars, soothsayers, sellers of water, musk, perfumes and spices. It is Aladdin's Cave, and the Camerman went suitably mad over it. (13)

Again Rhoda Amine's recollection of her initial reaction comes to mind here. She explains the tourist's disappointment if the place does not come up to his romantic expectations:

> To have swept away such picturesque slums and the distinctly Eastern traits would have been to disappoint such sentimental tourists as I then was, for I even recall a moment of disappointment to find so much of Cairo so modern. (14)

Except for the spices, any ordinary market-place in Egypt is devoid of the exaggerated and bizarre characteristics mentioned by Durrell. At least none of the features described above is shown in the lavishly-illustrated article, which reveals that "the Cameraman" had different views. The fact is that the European usually approaches the East with pre-conceived ideas, and moulds what he sees accordingly; this is certainly true of Durrell and Egypt. Edward Said, in discussing the phenomenon of orientalism, refers to this point:

> The European, whose sensibility tours the Orient, is a watcher, never involved, always detached, always ready for new examples of what the Description de l'Egypte called "bizarre jouissance". The Orient becomes a living tableau of queerness. (15)

Here is another example of how Durrell maintains the same distorted and inaccurate view of Egypt:

> The flesh is sorely tried in Egypt, it becomes desiccated, and the eyes are tried by the dust, and it's such a relief when you clear the land headland and suddenly

> feel trees and the cool they bring and
> then, abruptly, sand dunes and the seafront. (16)

Durrell's reference here to the heat and dust when travelling from Cairo to Alexandria in the month of November is exaggerated and untrue, particularly so when he mentions in the same article that they "did not take the lonely desert road for fear of getting stranded, but decided on the inner one that leads through a straggle of ill-lit villages".(17) The rural road from Cairo to Alexandria in winter is quite pleasant and free from dust, as the road winds through cultivated fields. Moreover, winter is the season when oranges are gathered and when other crops are to be seen in full bloom. "Headland" and "sand dunes" are used for exaggerated effect, since, in the first place, there are no cliffs or headlands near Alexandria, and secondly the "dunes" here describe the beach-sands on the Mediterranean coast which are different from genuine sand dunes in the desert.

At various places in The Alexandria Quartet an extraordinary scene is described in sadistic detail: the killing of a camel. Here is an instance when a camel is killed to provide meat for people coming to a Coptic festival:

> The camels of Narouz were being cut up for the feast. Poor things, they knelt there peacefully with their forelegs folded under them like cats while a horde of men attacked them with axes in the moonlight ... The animals made no move to avoid the blows, uttered no cries as they were dismembered. The axes bit into them, as if their great bodies were made of cork, sinking deep under every thrust. Whole members were being hacked off as painlessly, it seemed, as when a tree is pruned. The children were dancing about in the moonlight picking up the fragments and running off with them into the lighted town, great gobbets of bloody meat. (18)

Camel meat is eaten by poor Egyptians, Moslems in particular. In this context, however, the choice is made for the quaintness of the scene, killing the poor animal in front of a crowd of people and children. Moreover, this is a flaw of inappropriateness on the part of the novelist since the Hosnanis are rich Copts and not poor Moslems.

A first-hand account of the city is not expected of Durrell, for though he stayed in Egypt for almost four years, during and after World War II, he drew heavily from books by Europeans on Egypt to paint his Alexandria. He derives his information about the Egyptian people, their religion, customs and traditions mainly from two sources: J.W. McPherson's The Moulids of Egypt (1941), and E.W. Lane's An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (1898), which was written in Egypt during the years 1833-5, partly from notes made during the author's former visit in the years 1825-8. Unfortunately for Durrell, most of the customs described in Lane's book have become obsolete since that time and are of little relevance in giving a true picture of Egypt in the 1930's and early 1940's, in the way that Durrell meant to convey. Can we still accept Lane's views without question when he says in his book that many Arabs ascribe the erection of the Pyramids, and all the most stupendous remains of antiquity in Egypt, to "Gánn Ibn-Gánn" (the devil) and his servants the "ginn" (the spirits), believing it impossible that they could have been raised by human hands! Such fables appealed to Durrell when he was writing the Quartet where he wrote:

> Egyptians believe the desert to be an emptiness populated entirely by the spirits of demons and other grotesque visitants from Eblis, the Moslem Satan. (19)

On the other hand, Lane makes it clear that the custom of lower-class women in mourning of smearing their heads and faces and bosoms with mud goes back to the ancient Egyptians, as it is described by Herodotus (lib ii Cap.85). According to Lane, however, this ancient custom was petering out during his life-time, as both Coptic priests and Moslem sheikhs were against its practice. Durrell has attributed it mainly to the Moslem Egyptians, and later in subdued tones to the Copts. It is doubtful whether this essentially heathenish custom was practised as late as the 1940's, long after both Copts and Moslems had renounced it. An attitude similar to Lane's has been maintained by the Earl of Cromer who discusses the native population in his book Modern Egypt (1907). Cromer believes that Lane was biased in favour of the Moslems and against the Copts, who are strongly defended by Cromer. Yet his conclusion is surprising.

Cromer distinguishes between a Moslem and a Coptic Christian, though he debases both. The Moslem, according to Cromer, is backward because of his religion; a Copt is equally backward, not because of his religion, but because he is an oriental. Therefore, whereas it is unlikely that a Moslem can achieve any progress in future, unless he modifies his religion, there is a chance for a Copt to achieve some progress if he discards his oriental traditions and adopts the civilized ideas of the West:

> It is true that the Coptic Christian has remained stagnant, but there is this notable difference between the stagnation of the Moslem and that of the Copt. The Moslem stands in everything on the ancient ways because he is a Moslem, because the customs which are inter-woven with his religion, forbid him to change ... The Copt, on the other

> hand, has remained immutable, or nearly so, not because he is a Copt, but because he is an Oriental. (20)

Though Durrell cannot be accused of being prejudiced towards or against any sect on the basis of religion, he still regards Islam as a vague form of oriental religion. The attitude of the orientalist who conceives Islam as a collection of mumbo-jumbo, full of mythical tales and strange ways of conduct, is maintained throughout the Quartet. This is expressed through the constant degradation of local people in Alexandria, whether directly, when mixing mythical ideas with Islam, or indirectly, when commenting on a Moslem's behaviour in a critical, pejorative way. He considers any Arab to be a Moslem, since Islam is associated with Arabs. This is not true as there are many Christian Arabs. A few quotations from Mountolive's diary will illustrate this point:

> Monday. Ali says that shooting stars are stones thrown by the angels in heaven to drive off evil djinns when they try to eavesdrop on the conversations in Paradise and learn the secrets of the future.
>
> ...
>
> Also: Ali, the Negro factor, an immense eunuch, told me that they feared above all blue eyes and red hair as evil signs. Odd that the examining angels in the Koran as their most repulsive features have blue eyes. (21)

It was Lane who sanctioned the idea of the "ginn" or "djinns" to be associated with Moslems, and the idea seems to have appealed to Durrell and provided him with a wide scope to use his imagination. The same belief is not unfamiliar to Christians, however, though perhaps the terminology differs. In the Bible, Christ faces three temptations put by the Devil, Satan, to thwart his way towards God. Christ was able to avoid these temptations and so conquer the Devil. Moslems believe in the

existence of Satan - not in a material form - as a persuading power to do evil and to disobey God. To conquer the Devil or the "Ginn", a Moslem would recite some verses from the Koran. Stories built around the physical appearance of Ginn are fake and untrue; these are mostly produced by people who do not understand Islam at all. Durrell's elaboration in the above examples is based on his imagination. Lane, however, helped greatly in expounding these ideas. He wrote:

> The Arabs are a very superstitious people, and none of them are more so than those of Egypt. Many of their superstitions form a part of their religion, being sanctioned by the Kur-án; and the most prominent of these is the belief in "Ginn" or Genii - in the singular, "Ginnee". (22)

Religion, or any communal belief, is an integral part of the community who practise it, and part and parcel of the place itself. One thing which Durrell is completely ignorant of is Islam, and whenever there is a reference to Islam or to Moslems in his work there is liable to be a misconception. In Balthazar the reader is informed - or rather misinformed - that the Prophet said on Tuesday God created darkness absolute. This is a fallacy, perhaps based on Lane's book where he mistakenly reports that some days of the week are fortunate while others are considered unfortunate, and Tuesday is cited as one of the unfortunate days of the week. In Mountolive Leila tells Mountolive: "Did you know that in Islam everyone has his own star which appears when he is born and goes out when he dies?"(23) Islam does not hold such a superstitious belief; moreover, Durrell's choice of presenting most of these claims through Leila, a Copt, is an unhappy choice since she is not supposed to know much about this religion. This fable is based on a misunderstanding of the following verses of the Koran, probably derived by Durrell

from McPherson's misinterpretation when he quotes the following verses from the Koran describing how, in a vision, Prophet Mohammad sees the Angel Gabriel:

> He had seen him also another time,
> Near the Sidrah-tree, which marks the boundary
> Near which is the garden of repose. (24)

This means that Mohammad saw Gabriel, in a vision, near "the tree of extremity" which marks the boundary beyond which neither men nor angels can pass. These are the lines round which the fable is built. It claims that on the eve of mid-Shaaban, (the eighth Arabic month coming before Ramadan), the Lote Tree of Paradise is shaken and the falling leaves of the tree bear the names of all who will die in the following year.

In Mountolive, Durrell puts a song, based on the above myth, in the mouth of the local children who are projected as children of a different world:

> Lord of the shaken tree
> Of Man's extremity
> Keep thou our small leaves firm
> On branches free from harm
> For we thy little children be! (25)

Not only are these claims based on Western views, but they also help in expanding these views. The Western reader and critic simply believe them to be factual. Highet goes so far as to believe that the political plot referred to in the Quartet of the Copts supporting the Jews in Palestine, is historically true, which it is not. Highet goes on to propose a rift between the Moslems and the Copts of Egypt, which is again far from being true:

> The Moslems in Egypt, filled with new strength and aggressive energy, have been systematically suppressing and humiliating the Copts - although (or, perhaps, because) the Copts are the true

> ancient Egyptians, members of venerable Christian Church, a group so long-established that they regard the Moslems as either intruders or renegades. Therefore, as a counter-force to the Arabs, the Copts are now (1936 or so) supporting the Jewish underground in Palestine. (26)

This is absurd. It is based on Highet's misinterpretation of truthfulness in the novel and in this he is misled by the novelist himself. As a matter of fact, Durrell, a non-believer himself, has some admiration for the Copts,(27) though he looks down upon local inhabitants of Egypt. The Copts, for Durrell, stand for their early history associated with Coptic mythology which involves mysticism, and for their association, at one time, with Gnosticism, which has greatly attracted him. The fact that some of the Coptic monasteries are still in the desert in total seclusion, far from the hustle and bustle of ordinary life, has added to their attraction. Durrell's admiration has not arisen, by any means, from their being Christian. But, on the other hand, the pejorative representation of Moslems in the Quartet is due to the Western conception which equates Islam with any heretical belief erupting in heathenish communities. Unfortunately, the West has never taken sufficient steps to understand Islam or the people embracing it. Paul W. Harrison in his book Doctor in Arabia (1943), gives an example of how Islam is regarded by the West. Dr. Harrison has written of an ancient network of irrigation canals discovered in Mesopotamia, in Iraq, and reckons they are five or six centuries old: "It was a tremedous thing, that irrigation system. Modern engineers scratch their heads and indulge in tall speculations when asked how much it will cost to reproduce it". Dr. Harrison believes, however, that after the advent of Islam - which he wrongly calls "Mohammedanism" - such an undertaking would be impossible due

to the devastating nature of that "Oriental religion":

> This system lasted through scores of centuries. Doubtless it was improved and perfected as time passed. But with the introduction of Mohammedanism, there was an immediate change. The deputies who governed Mesopotamia from Medina and from Damascus had increasing difficulties in keeping the canals in order, for to live under such a system men must know how to work together. (28)

He adds:

> The real trouble was that the capacity for cooperation had been reduced to so low a level by six hundred years of Mohammedanism that, far from being able to develop such a system, they were not even able to repair a comparatively trifling damage to it. (29)

Definition of Islam varies from one book to another, but is usually put in the most absurd words. Here are a few examples:

> The Moslem religion, called Islam, began in the seventh century. It was started by a wealthy businessman of Arabia, called Mohammed. He claimed that he was a prophet. He found followers among other Arabs. He told them that they were picked to rule the world. (30)

> Shortly after Mohammed's death, his teachings were recorded in a book called the Koran. It became the holy book of Islam. (31)

> It is precisely the impossibility of an Ego as free power in the face of the divine that constitutes "Islam". Every attempt to meet the operations of God with a personal purpose or even a personal opinion is "masiga", - that is an evil willing, but an evidence that the powers of darkness and evil have taken possession of a man and expelled the divine from him. (32)

The first two passages imply a sense of disbelief on the part of the writer in the information given. This is clear through the choice of words and the way they are arranged. The third passage from The Decline of the West expresses a wrong view of Islam. A Moslem believes his fate to be pre-ordained, but he also

believes that it is based on his own actions, which means he has free will. Spengler's view, therefore, is mistaken.

The word 'Arab' or 'Moslem' is, in Durrell's mind, synonymous with dullness, low breeding and ill-manners. There is a remarkable gap between the real natives and the characters of the Quartet, most obvious in Durrell's condescending attitude towards the Egyptians, especially its Moslem population. When Raphael, the European barber, explains the Hosnani situation slowly to his master the "Memlik", the reason is given:

> ...for to register an idea in a Moslem mind is like trying to paint a wall: one must wait for the first coat to dry (the first idea) before applying a second. (33)

Raphael, in contrast,

> was full of ideas and opinions, but he uttered them obliquely, simplifying them so that they presented themselves in readily understandable form. (34)

In this context, Durrell expresses a familiar image of a Western view of orientals. Edward Said, quite accurately, portrays this attitude in the West:

> An Arab Oriental is that impossible creature whose libidinal energy drives him to paroxysms of over-stimulation - and yet, he is as a puppet in the eyes of the world, staring vacantly out at a modern landscape he can neither understand nor cope with. (35)

This is presumably derived from the detached attitude of the orientalist. There is an obvious lack of communication when Darley-Durrell communicates with the common man. At the "duck shoot" Darley is afraid of Faraj, the native boy who accompanies him, and unable to understand his speech he imagines every gesticulation to be against him. He cannot understand his servant Hamid whom he believes to be "djinn-ridden" simply because he murmurs to himself, though this is customary among Moslems;

when they have evil thoughts they ask God to drive the devil away and to lead them to the right path, the path towards God. A Moslem would say: "I seek refuge with God from Satan the accursed".

With a detachment from local inhabitants, characteristic of the characters of the Quartet, Balthazar writes to Darley about Scobie and his quarter:

> Nimrod tells me that once he used to be very popular in his quarter, but that latterly he had started to interfere with ritual circumcision among the children and became much hated. You know how the Arabs are. Indeed, that they threaten to poison him more than once. (36)

Even Scobie who has been shown as friendly and at ease in his quarter, in his own peculiar way, cannot escape the beastly anger and hatred of the Arabs. We then remember the incident of an angry mob carrying a child and following an old man in uniform:

> Behind him streamed a crowd of Arabs yelling and growling like savage but cowardly dogs. (37)

The mobbing action of "Arabs" here deprives them of their humanity and individuality. They are shown as unrestrained animals, acting without thinking, as a collective entity without individual characteristics.

The word "Arab" is used pejoratively in the Quartet to connote a number of collective characteristics claimed to belong to the Arabs. Pursewarden, once fed up with Justine's persistent nagging, asks her in a letter to "stop whining like an Arab".(38) Darley would go for a walk in the "dark Arab-smudged street".(39) Justine's habit of giving away her body freely for sensual pleasure is condemned:

> This sort of giving is really shocking because it is as simple as an Arab, without precociousness, unrefined as a drinking habit among peasants. (40)

Darley, living in a closed circle of psuedo-Alexandrians, sees the wives of Alexandrians "smartly turned out with the air of well-lubricated phantoms".(41) When he sees them in a different situation, he still holds the same antagonistic view:

> The women of Alexandria in all their stylish wickedness are here to say goodbye to someone who has captivated them by allowing them to befriend him. (42)

The novelist's partiality towards the cosmopolitan aspect of Alexandria, the Greek in particular, is discernible throughout the Quartet. It is very obvious that in portraying minor characters, Durrell is able to give a penetrating analysis of a minor Greek character, such as Panayotis, raising him to a tragic stature; while, on the other hand, he cannot extend his deep insight and sympathy to understand an equivalent local minor character of Egyptian Moslem background, such as Darley's servant, the one-eyed Hamid for example. The contrast to Hamid's incoherent murmurings to himself, Panayotis, the guardian of Nessim's "Summer Palace", is a dumb Greek whose "Greek loquacity, dammed up behind his disability (his tongue was cut out of his head) had overflowed into his eyes where it sparked and danced at the slightest remark or question".(43) Panayotis cannot understand Arabic in spite of his long stay in Egypt; nevertheless, he is chosen by Nessim to guard his summer abode.

Durrell does not possess E.M. Forster's capacity of observing all his characters with deep insight, for he does not express

the sentiments and motivation of different classes of people. In Forster's A Passage to India, each character, whether major or minor, local or British, can be studied as an epitome of the main characteristics his class represents. Fielding, the narrator, who may represent Forster himself, is deeply involved in the actions and motivation of people around him whom he regards with sympathy and understanding. Both Darley and his creator are detached from local inhabitants, though utterly eloquent and at ease when it comes to describing a European character. So neither in actuality nor in imagination could Durrell go deeper to convey the native's inner thinking or feeling; as an actual penetration into their way of living, the various conflicting aspirations and attainments are obviously lacking in the narrative. This is the main point which distinguishes him from Forster, for instance, and also from a lesser known novelist, P.H. Newby, who has written about Egypt, since these two novelists could express a profound sense of understanding when they interpret the motives behind the actions of their different characters. G.S. Fraser refers to Durrell's inability to understand the common man:

> The Greek poet, Constantine Trypani, complained to me once that Durrell, for all his philhellenism, has no understanding of the element of measure and of laborious sobriety, not only among Greeks but also among Arabs and Jews, in the eastern Mediterranean world. Durrell's world is one of palaces, and brothels, whores and millionaires. (44)

A similar view is expressed by Professor Manzalaoui:

> to decide, as he seems to have, upon giving Alexandria, its inhabitants, and the hinterland formed by Egypt and its life, a status in his novel which corresponds to an extent with the part that Dublin plays in Ulysses. Joyce knew Ireland, Mr. Durrell does not know Egypt. (45)

How far is Durrell then honest in representing the cosmopolitan aspect? Fraser denies him deep understanding of characters, whether Greek, Jews or Arabs. Similarly, Professor Enright considers "Justine and Company" inveterate actors; they act, they do not do; and he believes that Durrell has attempted to build a sort of Atrides around a group of "overbred neurotics and sexual dilettantes".(46) But Mary Graham Lund, referring to Balthazar, states that "the book throbs with such insistence upon reality".(47) Her view was formed by the "realistic" description of the exotic local festivals in Egypt, which were actually drawn by Durrell from other sources and not from experience, as will be discussed later.

Before proceeding to discuss the other side of Alexandria, its cosmopolitan aspect which is most conspicuous in the delineation and the choice of characters, it is worth examining two contrasting views of realism in the Quartet. The first view is of a Western critic who defends Durrell, accepts his representation as factual, and represents the orientalist's point of view; the second is of an Egyptian born in Alexandria who gives the local, "oriental" point of view.

The first critic is Hilary Corke who, in his article "Mr. Durrell and Brother Criticus", attempts to defend Durrell against the charges levelled at him by "Brother Criticus", the term he employs since he names only the charges and avoids mentioning the individual critics. His enthusiasm is obviously biased and his argument weak. He begins by stating his critical approach: "I propose first to examine the Quartet in what I may call an actuarial way; and then to examine the pronounce-

ment of Brother Criticus upon it".(48) His reasons are that "it could illuminate two fields at once - Mr. Durrell's work, and the contemporary state of literary reviewing".(49) In his answer to the first charge against Durrell, that he is not naturalistic, Corke attempts vehemently enough to persuade the reader of the validity of his information since he himself has been to Cairo and passed two unforgettable years there, after the war. He claims that Durrell's Alexandria corresponds exactly with the real city:

> Making the proper slight allowances for shifts in space and time, the correspondence of Durrell's Alexandria with what I know of the sister city are extraordinarily exact; to open his covers is simply to step back - I do not mean just the outward scene but the emotional landscape, the fetid politics, the sexual pattern. (50)

Corke's views betray his partiality to Durrell as he adopts the orientalist's attitude towards an Eastern city. His only reason for maintaining his view is that he has been there himself. Corke's own appreciation of Durrell's work emerges from the pretext that the novel is a faithful mirror of life at the time, which is not the case. For him, Durrell is a true and major novelist simply because what he tells the reader in his novels does really exist. His argument betrays a twofold mistake; first, that Durrell depicts a true picture; second, it is erroneous to value a work of art merely on the assumption of its being a truthful representation of real life.

Before proceeding to his detailed argument, here is Corke's evaluation of the four volumes of the Quartet as a whole:

> The books are fabulously well-written, with an exuberance that evidently leads professional

> detectors of "bad taste" to detect it, but with a try-anything-once vigour that pays off out of all proportion to any minor deficits it entails in places. (51)

He goes on to describe the mass reaction of critics to the Quartet as "hysteria"; yet his weak, unbalanced argument comes as an anticlimax to what is expected. The first charge he professes to defend Durrell against is that "Durrell is not naturalistic" since his portrayal of Alexandria is purely "a mirage of his own over-excited mind, not a geographical reality", (52) and since Nessim Hosnani is shown as a fabulously rich Coptic businessman who is nowhere shown actually earning his money. As Corke has attributed his reasoning of the reality of the city to his own experience, as already mentioned, he goes on to say that he himself has met a fabulously rich Coptic businessman:

> He spent his mornings eating meringues glacés in Groppi's, his afternoon asleep in his Second Empire bedroom, and his evenings at the Gizeh night-club. Quite probably that was where he did his business: he grew no poorer. But of course he went to his office too: just like Nessim. (53)

Corke's exaggeration here is typical of a Western critic who expects to find the orient different, exaggerated and exotic, no matter how illogical the total effect is. This is another example: he answers the critic who objects to the reality of Alexandrian mirrors (used symbolically by Durrell as their recurrence in the text and shades of meaning suggest) in the same exaggerated way he has maintained throughout his argument:

> Mine in Cairo was about nine feet square and encased in meretricious ormulu ... One could have scrawled upon it half a chapter of Le Rouge et Le Noir - especially with one's shaving stick, which is what my text appears to have. (54)

Corke takes the issue personally; "mine" refers to his mirror in Cairo, and "my text" refers to the Quartet which makes his view more subjective than objective, but later he seems to contradict himself when his argument about naturalism in art comes as an anti-climax to his subsequent fervent defence:

> But of course these are mere argumenta ad subhomines. Naturalism is no necessary and sufficient good, on the stage or in the novel either. This is a work of imagination, suggestion, evocation, not a court-room file. (55)

His realization that naturalism in itself is not a sufficient criterion to evaluate a work of art does not, however, make his judgment any better. Here is another example to illustrate his mistaken views. He defends Durrell's characterization, claiming the characters are credible enough, but unfortunately for him, he selects the most bizarre and incredible ones to support his argument: Scobie and Pombal. Durrell has admitted that his characters are imaginary, but Corke sees them as real:

> The "modern" preference is for flat characters, will-less characters, characters that are, in a word, characterless.... "Real" persons are largely compromises between individuality and type. (56)

Since he considers Durrell's characters are "compromises between individuality and type", therefore, they are real.

Professor Manzalaoui considers Hilary Corke's article the weakest advertisement every written. Manzalaoui, himself an Egyptian from Alexandria, was disappointed when the Quartet appeared because it did not come up to his expectations. His

main complaint is the false picture Durrell gives of Alexandria:

> The Quartet attitudinizes. Its events take place in a pink and overscented haze; everything is coloured with the renchérissement of traditional western pseudo-orientalism. Curiously, Durrell seems to think that his own baroque vision resembles the poignant intimacy of Cavafis, and of his own earlier poetry. (57)

He further believes that the Quartet has not achieved the success it could have had; the main reasons he gives are:

> there are inherent flaws of vision in the writer, that he has not used his talents in their full integrity, that a hive of otiose entities unaccountably swarms in, and that the work, far from having the unity it pretends to have, is used as a cumbersome holdall, and contains subterfuges to distinguish its true structure or rather its absence of serious structural vision. (58)

Manzalaoui gives the other side of the story as he lists the flaws both in Durrell's vision and his work. Though he believes Durrell's vision to be faulty and myopic, he considers him as a talented writer who has not used his talents to the full.

Manzalaoui promises to give an objective "balanced opinion" after the initial rage caused by the shock of reading the Quartet. What shocked him, however, was not the unworthiness of the tetralogy but the unexpected nature of the narrative. As a poet, Durrell was very promising and critics expected him to be no less so as a novelist. Manzalaoui considers Durrell's poetry of the Mediterranean and of personal landscapes as his most valuable contribution to this century's literature and sensibility. He praises Durrell the poet, endorsing "the wit-writer, ebullient, out to give his reader shock-treatment, the writer of Mythology, and the Ballad of the Good Lord Nelson".(59)

He believes that Durrell has given the travel book "a new dimension", and Manzalaoui considers The Black Book a "clearly original work, in its evocation of moods, its weaving of reflections and lyric insights around anecdote, in its avant-garde freedom from restrictions of moral convention and literary forms, but, mainly for the total freshness of its phrases".(60) In Durrell's book of criticism, A Key to Modern British Poetry, he finds four interesting chapters on "the limits of objective criticism, on the new conception of time and space, and on the human personality and artistic probe into truth".(61) Nevertheless, in evaluating the Quartet Manzalaoui believes that "in the execution the book is not the success that it might have been, and is not in fact the book one could have expected".(62) He exclaims: "Is the dullness of outlook in Mountolive meant to show a world that is more objectively real than the personalized world of other volumes?"(63) He regrets the artificiality of construction in Clea, "with its many unlikely coincidences, and its role as a long-drawn-out dénouement to the whole".(64) Manzalaoui's list of the failings of the Quartet is a lengthy one; here is an instance:

> There is a failure to find any interest in normality, which drives the author into an exploitation of the fantastic, without the positive exploratory value of surrealism, and too late for the negative debunking virtue of da-daism. (65)

By comparing Durrell's fantasies in the Quartet to "the negative debunking virtue of da-daism", Manzalaoui is denying him realism in the novel, not to mention any conventional attributes. In contrast, Corke bestows upon Durrell's work naturalistic qualities - qualities not necessarily demanded of many novelists - since he considers the brilliant set pieces, characters and

setting in the Quartet as a true copy of actual events. Corke's view is derived from his acceptance of the conventions of orientalism; Manzalaoui's from the awareness of this kind of mistaken attitude in the West, which he expected not to find in Durrell. Manzalaoui's view is also derived from the "foreign" Alexandria created in the novel, with its mass of cosmopolitan society, supposed to be the normal kind of people one might encounter there.

The creation of a second level of Alexandria, the sophisticated European seaport, was due to a number of factors: the city's history, Durrell's hatred of Egypt and - or because of - his love of Greece. The other face of Alexandria is, still, not the true one. Robert Scholes, in The Fabulators, considers Durrell's Alexandria as a Greek city on Egyptian soil; in it the East and West meet as they rarely have elsewhere. Scholes, in the following argument, touches a main point:

> It is clear that Durrell's Alexandria is as much a country of the mind as Poe's Virginia or Kafka's Germany. Some of the place-names are real but beyond that there is little resemblance between the fictional Alexandria of Durrell and the geographical one. (66)

This is true. Durrell's Alexandria is the historical city founded by Alexander the Great and described in Cavafy's poems. Darley, returning to Alexandria at the beginning of Clea, sums up his conception of the city:

> The one city which for me always hovered between illusion and reality, between the substance and the poetic images which its very name arouses in me. (67)

Durrell's image of Alexandria does not differ greatly from this intangible description since he could not visualize the city

without invoking an aura of romanticism associated with its history. This image, however, stands in contrast to the earthy reality of the locality. In actuality, he hated the real city, as is clear from his correspondence.

In March 1944, Durrell wrote to Diana Gould from Alexandria expressing his disgust towards the Alexandrians - the local people:

> The thin exhausted lusts of the Alexandrians running out like saw-dust out of dummies; the shrill ululation of the black women, the rending of hair and clothes in mourning ... Even in your Italian brothel I cannot think how to write or speak to you from this flesh-pot, sink-pot, melting pot of dullness. (68)

In August 1958, at a time when he had just finished writing Mountolive and had still to finish Clea, Durrell wrote to Miller:

> Holiday magazine want me to go up the Nile, what next? I bet you'd love it; but I loathed Egypt! (69)

Though the novelist's technique does not allow the reader to construct an exact chronology for the Quartet, the events recorded in Justine start before World War II, and Clea ends with some events after the war. A glance at Durrell's biography shows that his first arrival in Egypt was in 1941; that is, after the war had started. All incidents in the Quartet occurring before the war are imaginary or adapted from other sources, and cannot be based on any first-hand experience of pre-war Egypt. Among the sources he consulted and made use of were E.M. Forster's books on Alexandria. In his introduction to Pharos and Pharillon, Forster denies that the early Alexandrians were pure Egyptians: "nor have the Alexandrians ever been truly Egyptian".(70) Durrell's choice of characters shows his adoption

of the same view. Forster believes that God according to Moslems is "a God of power, who may temper his justice with mercy, but who does not stoop to the weakness of love".(71) Durrell adopted Forster's mistaken view and not only was he unable to understand Islam, but in many instances equated ignorance and stupidity with Moslems. In answer to the first misunderstanding, suffice it to say that before reading or reciting any verses of the Koran, not to mention before starting anything at all, a Moslem should pronounce: "In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful", which implies a completely opposite view.

Forster's view, one of many, affected Durrell because he was already tuned to such an influence. In fact, Durrell went unwillingly to Egypt after spending a few happy years on the Greek island of Corfu. As a philhellene, Durrell excluded anything that might interfere with his love of Greece. Remembering those good old days, he tells Galina Vromen: "I never would have left [Greece] if the Germans hadn't charged into it from one side and chased me out through the other".(72) In Egypt, not only did he write a great part of Prospero's Cell, the book about Corfu, but he also moved in a circle of Greeks, British diplomats, other Europeans and a few totally Westernized Egyptians who did not represent the locals since they were as detached from their society as any foreigners living there. Unconsciously, Durrell was able to convey the impact of the place on foreigners living in Alexandria at the time as well as the manner and life of this small elite society, but unfortunately he could not penetrate into the inner life of the natives. While in Egypt he edited, along with a number of

colleagues in "exile", a magazine entitled Personal Landscape expressing their views and exasperation. In Middle East Anthology, published in 1946, which comprises some of the writings appearing in Personal Landscape as well as in other magazines of exile, the contributors, mostly British, reveal their shared annoyance at the flat landscape and the hot weather of Egypt. Another conspicuous quality they have in common is their detachment from the local people. G.S. Fraser, who was in Egypt at that time, wrote "Christmas Letter Home", a poem addressed to his sister in Aberdeen, expressing his nostalgia for "the British weather":

> Drifting and innocent and sad like snow,
> Now memories tease me, wherever I go,
> And I think of the glitter of granite and distances
> And against the blue air the lovely and bare trees,
> And slippery pavements spangled with delight
> Under the needles of a winter's night. (73)

Durrell's exasperation was expressed in a letter to Miller. Miller wanted to visit Egypt, but Durrell wrote to him:

> No, I don't think you would like it.
> First this steaming humid flatness - not
> a hill or mound anywhere - choked to bursting
> point with the bones and the crummy deposits
> of wiped out cultures .... A sea flat, dirty
> brown and waveless rubbing the port. (74)

Nevertheless, Durrell's superb descriptions of Alexandria, his set pieces, Darley's nostalgic remembrances recurring in the Quartet, the characters, the romantic setting, all do offer a different Alexandria. Why? Durrell himself describes his approach in the Quartet in an interview:

> I took an ordinary set of naturalistic
> narration and shoved it through a digital
> computer that already had printed on it
> the Arabian Nights ... while I was there,
> I could see the Arabian Nights, though
> nobody else could - ask any of the troops
> who were there. (75)

One critic, W.W. Robson, commenting on Durrell's choice of Alexandria believes that "his Alexandria, replete with atrocity, perversity, and abnormality, offers the most sensational alternative possible to the tepidity of English life and culture";(76) but Durrell gives a different reason for his preference for Alexandria, a historical reason:

> The important factor was that Alexandria was the source of our entire culture. All the religions met in a head-on clash there, all the metaphysics, our science was born there: the first measurement of the earth, Euclid. It was the birthplace of our mathematics. (77)

In short, Alexandria provided him with a wide scope for his contradictory views. The characters of the Quartet are a good case in point.

On the whole, the characters of the Quartet correspond closely to Durrell's Alexandria, the city of imagination, not to the real city. They are heterogeneous characters who are influenced by the landscape. In the beginning of Justine, Darley, sitting on a Greek island, is reminiscing about his past:

> I see at last that none of us is properly to be judged for what happened in the past. It is the city which should be judged though we, its children, must pay the price. (78)

Darley recalls discussing with Justine one day their futile relationship, how it would be scandalous if their love-affair was discovered - he a school teacher and she a married Alexandrian society woman - when she attributed their actions to a fateful power of the city:

> You talk as if there was a choice. We are not strong or evil enough to exercise choice. All this is part of an experiment arranged by something else, the city perhaps, or another part of ourselves. How do I know? (79)

In a sense the powerful effect of the city on characters has deprived them of having a free will of their own. Durrell has once called them his "dummies"; Lionel Trilling has drawn the attention to their "peculiar negative relation to the will".(80) Melissa's will-less melancholic fits are attributed to the cafard of the city. Darley declares in the Quartet:

> We are the children of our landscape;
> it dictates behaviour and even thought in
> the measure to which we are responsive
> to it. (81)

All the major characters, Justine, Mellisa, Nessim and others, are projected as will-less dummies lacking stature but they fit in with their surroundings. They are children of their landscape. Another peculiar characteristic attributed to most of the characters in the Quartet is their licentiousness which is again a peculiarity of the city.

One predominant feature among the characters is their estrangement from as well as their aversion to local Alexandria. There is a strong sense of their being alien - the fact that a number of characters are foreigners working for their respective countries brings home this point. On the other hand, the characters who are described by their author as Alexandrian are of heterogeneous origin, conforming entirely to Durrell's imaginary Alexandria. The first novel of the Quartet, Justine, starts with the narrator, a British citizen, who is identified later in Balthazar as Darley, sitting on a Greek island where he is seeking to heal the wounds he suffered as a result of living in Alexandria. Darley is reminiscing about the eventful years he spent there when suddenly his recollections turn into the actual events of the past, and the reader watches the characters

emerging and incidents gradually unfolding. Darley is seen working in Alexandria as a school teacher with a salary hardly sufficient to sustain him. As a foreigner and a colonial, he makes contacts with some of the foreigners living in the city as well as with the elite of local society, the feudalists; but like Durrell himself he is more interested in the Greek aspect of Alexandria and in every small reminder of its Greek origin.

Like the narrator of Tom Stoppard's Travesties, the narrator of the Quartet is not to be wholly trusted; but whereas Henry Carr is an old man with a failing memory, Darley is a passive young man with faulty, myopic vision. In the second novel Balthazar writes to Darley:

> You have retired to your island, with, as you think, all the data about us and our lives. No doubt you are bringing us to judgement on paper in the manner of writers. I wish I could see the result. It must fall very far short of truth. (82)

Balthazar refers to Darley's indiscretion in drawing from Arnauti's Moeurs for facts, affirming that "a diary is the last place to go if you wish to seek the truth about a person".(83) Darley learns from Balthazar, a little later, that Justine's love was not for him but for Pursewarden who did not really care for her. She had been using Darley as a decoy, to camouflage the truth from Nessim.

Nevertheless, the basic information about characters is conveyed through Darley who remembers his first mistress in Alexandria, Melissa, a Greek from Smyrna, whose parents have disowned her. Melissa is a cabaret dancer who frequently goes to bed with one of the customers to make up for her low wages.

She had once been a model at the Atelier, "a humble, unenviable job".(84) Before meeting Darley, she had been a mistress to Cohen, an old married Jewish furrier. Darley first meets her when she is sick in Pombal's flat, occupied at that time by Pursewarden. In return for Darley's kindness and care for her, she offers to be his mistress when she recovers, and subsequently she does. Melissa is frequently associated with Greek mythology: "She would lie with far-seeing eyes like a sibyl";(85) when Darley first sees her she seems to him "like a catastrophic Greek comic mask";(86) at her refusal to call on her former lover, Cohen, on his deathbed, she is made to stand for absolute love which takes all or leaves all and she is identified with the pagan goddess of love, "austere and merciless Aphrodite".(87)

Darley's second mistress, Justine, is a hysterical, attractive, nymphomaniac Jewess, born of a poor Jewish family which has since emigrated to Salonika. More information is given through Arnauti's Moeurs, for instance that Justine's father was a Jew from Odessa. Justine's attitude to the city strongly illustrates the two contrasting aspects presented by the novelist. She is both a natural offspring of Alexandria, imaginary Alexandria, in harmony with the ancient history of the city, yet she feels suffocated in Egypt. Referring to Arnauti and Justine, Balthazar says: "He is when all is said and done a sort of minor Antony, and she a Cleo!"(88) On another occasion he tells Darley: "All our women are Justines ... in different style".(89)

Darley's friend and ideal love, Clea, is introduced in the

second half of Justine, though her name is mentioned earlier. She is recognized as the "'woman of the town whom [Justine] visited frequently, and whose influence on her was profound enough'",(90) to make Arnauti suspect an illicit relationship between them. Clea is an integral part of the city, identified with Alexandria though she is French in origin. She fits with the group of characters like a glove; she was Scobie's greatest friend; she has "painted a wonderful portrait of him in his police uniform with the scarlet tarbrush on his head, and the fly-whisk, as thick as a horse's tail, laid gracefully across great his bony knees".(91) She spends much of her time with him deserting her cobweb studio to make him tea and "to enjoy those interminable monologues about a life which has long since receded, lost its vital momentum, only to live on vicariously in the labyrinths of memory".(92) They are perfectly matched, and perfectly happy in their relationship, like a father and a daughter. It is Clea who supplies him with tobacco. When he dies she takes his parrot and pays for his funeral. Clea is also Justine's lover for a while; she is Pursewarden's trustful friend whom she approaches to get rid of her "embarrassing virginity"; she is Nessim's dearest friend. When Melissa is dying it is for Clea that she asks and it is Clea who spends whole nights telling her stories and tending her. She is Balthazar's clinic painter: "the ravages of syphilis, for example, in every degree of anomaly, Clea has recorded for him in large coloured drawings of terrifying lucidity and tenderness".(93) In collaboration with Amaril she designs, while he creates, Semira's nose. In a fleeting vignette showing Narouz making love to a prostitute identified later during the festival with

Clea, Durrell is able to transmute Clea beyond the physical world when he identifies her with Aphrodite, the goddess of love. She becomes a symbol of love who can be identified with Cleopatra, Clio or Aphrodite.(94) In the fourth volume, Clea, she proves her power over the arts for she is both able to paint well and, by loving Darley, able to turn him into a real artist.

Unlike Clea, Justine's husband, Nessim, is purely Egyptian. It is remarkable, however, to note that the first major Egyptian character we come across is a fabulously rich Copt who is "at odds" with the city, the actual Egyptian city. In fact, he represents the Egyptian feudalist existing under British occupation when feudalists were the allies of the British and other foreigners and therefore were completely segregated from ordinary Egyptians. Nessim has been educated in Germany and England, "the fact which has confused him and made him unfit for the life of the city".(95) He spends in Arabian fashion and gives notes of hand to shopkeepers. Being a well-known and trusted person, night-clubs and restaurants accept his signed cheques which are punctually honoured; Selim, his secretary, is sent out with the car to trace the route of the previous day and to pay any debts accumulated in the course of it. To the local inhabitants, however, he is a misfit:

> This attitude was considered eccentric and high-handed in the extreme by the inhabitants of the city, whose coarse and derived distinctions, menial preoccupations and faulty education gave them no clue to what style in the European sense was. (96)

Nevertheless, Nessim fits in perfectly with Durrell's city of the imagination. Paradoxically, the reasons for Nessim's aliena-

tion from the locality are the same reasons which make him fit into Durrell's Alexandria. His behaviour is more European than Egyptian, making him closer to his creator than to his fellow citizens. He is often seen riding in his Rolls Royce; he has built a fabulous "Summer Palace" for his wife in the middle of the desert; and he has the King as a frequent visitor to his house. His fellow businessmen treat him with condescension as they would treat someone who is a "little soft in the head". He is notorious among the inhabitants for not owning a garçonnière in spite of his wealth. Nevertheless, he is a friend of most of the major characters; beside his marriage to Justine, he is a close friend to Pursewarden who trusted him and who refused to believe he is a partner in any political conspiracy; he has been friends with Darley, Clea and Melissa, who bore him a child.

Nessim's brother, Narouz, is presented as a contrast to Nessim - uneducated, shabbily-dressed and ugly:

> The younger brother, shorter and more squarely built than Nessim, wore a blue French peasant's blouse open at the throat and with the sleeves rolled back, exposing arms and hands of great power covered by curly dark hair ... The ends of his baggy Turkish trousers with an old-fashioned drawstring, were stuffed into crumpled old jackboots of soft leather. (97)

Narouz is strongly associated with the earthy locality, with the Upper Egyptian peasants, something which segregates him from other characters, not least from his own brother Nessim. His upper lip is split literally from the spur of the nose and his self-conscious ugliness adds to his ferocity. Durrell frequently uses animal imagery when he describes local characters, especially so in relation to Narouz. Nessim's elegance is con-

trasted by Narouz's brutality:

> Nessim feared bloodshed, manual work and bad manners: Narouz rejoiced in them all. (98)

Unlike Narouz but more like Nessim, Leila, mother to both, is a distinguished Copt:

> As a girl, Leila had been both beautiful and rich. The daughter of a blue-stocking convent-bred and very much in society, she had been among the first Coptic women to abandon the veil and to start to take up the study of medicine against her parents' will. (99)

Leila is Mountolive's first love; she initiates him into the world and introduces him to the world of music and the arts. In his first meetings with her, Mountolive finds that she surpasses him in both experience and culture:

> Leila was not only more experienced; to his utter chagrin he found that she was even better read, in his own language than he was, and better instructed. (100)

Leila has a tremendous effect on young Mountolive; his whole life is moulded by her first touches:

> Leila was able to see that the social man in him was overripe before the inner man had grown up. She turned him out as one might turn out an old trunk, throwing everything into confusion. (101)

Unlike her son, Nessim, her Western education has not confused her, but like him she is detached from her surroundings. She is an embodiment of her author's mistaken views of Islam and Moslems. She holds the same Western misconceptions towards the East, an orientalist's view.

Leila's lover, Mountolive, is first introduced in Justine as a British diplomat who falls in love with the mother of Nessim and Narouz. Later, in the third volume, his early life in England is probed as well as an early visit to Egypt when

young Mountolive was staying with the Hosnani family to improve his Arabic. Mountolive gets entangled with the other characters first through Nessim and his family, and later when he comes back to Egypt as the British Ambassador he makes new friends and meets his old ones, though his love for Leila fades. Though there is a whole volume of the Quartet named after him, Mountolive seems to be a means to an end, a character to fulfil a purpose by the author, a puppet figure. It is unlikely that such an ambassador would fall in love with a blind girl and marry her in spite of his position. He is never convincing as Ambassador plenipotentiary. He makes a fatal decision as soon as he comes to office when, heedless of Maskelyne's advice, he trusts Nessim, keeps Pursewarden and transfers Maskelyne.

As Darley represents one aspect of his creator, Pursewarden represents another aspect: the literary aspect. Like his author, Pursewarden is a British diplomat and a writer; but unlike Darley he is greatly successful as a writer. He stands for a kind of promiscuous sex-mania which he believes is the reason behind his success, but which ironically leads to his final disaster when he commits suicide.

Pursewarden's death turns him into a figure with mythical proportions so that his physical features fade from memory to be replaced by a metaphysical essence:

> It was as if in dying he had cast off from his earthly character, and taken on some of the gradiose proportions of his own writings. ... Death provided a new critical referent ... to the... ineffectual and often tedious man with whom we had had to cope ... Later I was to hear people ask whether Pursewarden had been tall

> or short, whether he had worn a moustache or not: and these simple memories were the hardest to recover and to be sure of. (102)

In the second novel of the Quartet Balthazar writes to Darley to correct his information concerning Pursewarden: "'I won't say that you have been less than just to him - only that he does not seem to resurrect on paper into a recognizable image of the man I knew'".(103) Clea's letter tells Darley that Pursewarden has gained in stature after his death. Clea, reading Pursewarden's penultimate volume of God is a Humorist, discerns some criteria concerning the relation between the artist and his work of art:

> An artist does not live a personal life as we do, he hides it, forcing us to go to his books if we wish to touch the true source of his feelings. Underneath all his pre-occupation with sex, society, religion, etc... there is, quite simply, a man tortured beyond endurance by the lack of tenderness in the world. (194)

Another "foreign" diplomat is George-Gaston Pombal, a minor French consular official in the French Embassy with whom Darley shares a flat and, frequently, some of his girls. For Pombal "the tiresome treadmill of protocol and entertainment ... is full of exotic charm".(105) His most favoured topic of conversation is women, and he is also involved with numerous women. Nevertheless, his love-affairs always end melodramatically. Realizing one day that his relation with his mistress Sveva should come to an end, he takes her in his car to a secluded place near the bank of a river to break the news quietly. This leads to an unexpected result for she went mad with fury and started throwing stones at both him and his car, before throwing herself in the river, even though she could not

swim. Darley finds him in a "decomposed" state because his car is spoilt and he is afraid of a scandal if his affair is made public. Pombal's tragi-comic love-affair with Fosca is revealed in Clea. He is head-over-heels in love, but this time with a married, pregnant woman whose husband is in the army. One day he takes her in his little dinghy and they accidentally come close to some captive French battleship kept inactive in the Mediterranean. The French sentry shoots a warning bullet which accidentally kills Fosca, to Pombal's shame and misery.

Balthazar, closely linked to all the characters, is a Jew "with all the Jew's bloodthirsty interest in the ratiocinative faculty".(106) He comes from Greece and his Greek origin is never lost sight of: "under the black hat a skull ringing with Smyrna, and the Sporades where his childhood lay".(107) He seems to be one of the Greek icons: "under his chin he has one dark spur of hair growing such as one sometimes sees upon the hoof of a sculptured Pan".(108) In spite of his detachment from the local scene, Durrell describes him as "the key of the city".(109)

Scobie serves as comic relief in the narrative since such an extraordinary character is unlikely to be encountered in real life. This character might have been inspired by the introduction to McPherson's The Moulids of Egypt, in which the author gives a brief history of his stay in Egypt. McPherson mentions that he held the post of "Mamur Zapt", Chief Inquisitor, at the head of the secret police, keeping his double military rank, both British and Egyptian. In the same introduction McPherson mentions an Egyptian Moslem saint, Sheikh Ismail Imbabi, whose tomb was turned into a shrine, and whose anniversary does not

follow the Islamic calendar. Instead, it follows the Coptic month "Bauna", "the date when ancient Egyptians watched for the mystic tear of Isis believed to fall at that time and that place into the river of Osiris".(110) In the course of Durrell's narrative, Scobie is promoted as a chief of secret police, and after his death, in the latter half of the Quartet, he is transmuted into a local saint whose shrine is visited by both Moslems and Copts. Durrell's creation of Scobie, though his character is surrounded by a number of unlikely improbabilities, makes him fit into his hilarious world.

The licentiousness of the behaviour of the characters and their promiscuous attitude towards sex are inspired by Alexandria's historical background, during its Greek foundation and the romantic history associated with the Roman period which followed. J. Marlowe in The Golden Age of Alexandria refers to this peculiarity of the ancient Alexandrians:

> In a pagan world not notable for self-restraint, the Alexandrians were notorious for their licentiousness. The most popular pagan cult was that of Dionysus. (111)

That Durrell was conscious of this peculiarity is clear from a remark made by Balthazar while talking to Darley about Justine, Arnauti and the City:

> As far as Alexandria is concerned, you can understand why this is really a city of incest - I mean that here the cult of Serapis was founded. For this etiolation of the heart and veins in love-making must make one turn inwards upon one's sister. The lover mirrors himself like Narcissus in his own family: there is no exit from the predicament. (112)

At the beginning of Justine, Darley, in an exposition of the city, states that the "sexual provender which lies to hand is staggering in its variety and profusion".(113) Darley remembers

Nessim saying that "'Alexandria was the great winepress of love'".(114) Justine feels their licence is imposed:

> 'Ah!' said Justine once 'that there should be something free, something Polynesian about the licence in which we live'. (115)

She wonders how it is that Darley is one of them yet he is different, but "what she is groping after is really the distinctive quality which emanates not from us but from the landscape".(116)

All through his writings, Durrell's devotion to and worship of "the spirit of place" remain unshattered. In his book Spirit of Place, Durrell wrote:

> 'You write', says a friendly critic in Ohio, 'as if, the landscape, were more important than the characters'. If not exactly true, this is near enough the mark, for I have evolved a private notion about the importance of landscape, and I willingly admit to seeing 'characters' almost as functions of landscape. (117)

Every individual is endowed with the special flavour characterizing his locality:

> Just as one particular vineyard will always give you a special wine with discernible characteristics so a Spain, an Italy, a Greece will always give you the same type of culture - will express itself through the human being just as it does through its wild flowers. (118)

In Spirit of Place, Durrell has championed the theory that human beings are expressions of their landscapes. He has gone as far as emphasizing that if one could "exterminate the French at a blow and resettle the country with Tartars"(119) the latter would soon acquire the distinctive national characteristics exhibited by French people today, simply because their behaviour would be reshaped and affected by the atmosphere of France. This influence of the spirit of place on characters is emphasized

in the Quartet:

> It is as if the preoccupations of this landscape were centred somewhere out of reach of the average inhabitant - in a region where the flesh, stripped by over-indulgence of its final reticences, must yield to a preoccupation vastly more comprehensive: or perish in the kind of exhaustion represented by the works of the Mouseion, the guile-less playing of hermaphrodites in the green courtyards of art and science. (120)

Durrell endows his modern characters with the licentious peculiarity of the ancient place. Remembering Melissa, the first thing that comes to Darley's mind is physical:

> She would come a few minutes late of course - fresh perhaps from some assignation in a darkened room, from which I avert my mind; but so fresh, so young, the open petal of the mouth that fell upon mine like an unslaked summer. (121)

Darley "found Melissa, washed up like a half-drowned bird, on the dreary littorals of Alexandria, with her sex broken".(122) Melissa's behaviour and her multi-love-affairs seem so natural to Darley that he never even questions her. Her chance, but effective, intimacies include Nessim and Pursewarden; she has a child from the first and she reveals the plot of the arms smuggling to the second. On his death-bed, Melissa's lover, Cohen, recalls in a delirium his conversations with her, and when he dies they retrieve from the rummage in his pockets a small empty bottle of the cheap kind of perfume which Melissa used. She would not reveal much of her past and her many lovers, feeling ashamed as if her actions were involuntary.

Justine is a worshipper of the cult of pleasure, a nymphomaniac who is reputed to have many lovers. Beside her marriage to Nessim, she has been married to Arnauti, a French writer and

author of Moeurs, and had a daughter, probably by him. When a child, she had been raped by a relative. To Darley, Justine "could not help but remind me of that race of terrific queens which left behind them the ammoniac smell of their incestuous loves to hover like a cloud over the Alexandrian subconscious".(123) She is "surrounded by an aura of sexuality".(124) Yet Justine's sensuality is heightened to stand on the same footing as those female love-martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of love:

> Nevertheless I can still see a direct connection between the picture of Justine bending over the dirty sink with the foetus in it, and poor Sophia of Valentinus who died for a love as perfect as it was wrong-headed. (125)

Here Durrell transmutes Justine's sexual urge into a superior passion, love, as if sex and love meant the same thing.

In spite of his passive attitude, especially in the early volumes of the Quartet, Darley has had a number of sexual relations as well as casual love partners, sharing Pombal's girls and frequenting the houses of love. He is also identified with Cavafy who had experienced the agony of the flesh; in Justine Darley finds it "painful" to give a lecture on the old poet of the city,

> feeling the old man all around me, so to speak, impregnating the gloomy streets around the lecture-room with the odour of those verses distilled from the shabby but rewarding loves he had experienced - loves perhaps bought with money, and lasting a few moments, yet living on now in his verse - so deliberately and tenderly had he captured the adventive minute and made all its colours fast. (126)

"The old poet of the city" is celebrated by Durrell in a poem, "Cavafy", where the poet's licentious behaviour is stressed and where the affinity between him and the narrator of the Quartet

is more obvious:

> The forest of dark eyes he mused upon,
> Out of ikons, waking beside his own
> In stuffy brothels,on strained mattresses,
> Watched by the melting vision of the flesh,
> Eros the tutor of our callowness
> Deployed like ants across his ageing flesh
> The crises of great art, the riders
> Of love, their bloody lariats whistling,
> The cries locked in the quickened breath,
> The love-feast of a sort of love-in-death. (127)

Darley undergoes the same experience in the Quartet.

The pure angelic Clea has her share of sexuality; in Justine, a lesbian affair is suggested between her and Justine; her abnormal suggestion to Pursewarden has been referred to earlier; when in Syria she becomes Amaril's lover, becomes pregnant but has an abortion. Clea is Narouz's ideal beloved and she is Darley's friend turned into lover.

Both Balthazar and Scobie are homosexuals. Balthazar is a physician whose homosexuality has resulted in a scandal after he falls in love with a young Greek actor. As a physician, he spends much of his working-time in the government clinic for venereal diseases.

Scobie's homosexuality is of a rather peculiar nature as he is reported to have "tendencies"; he explains to Darley: "'sometimes at the full moon, I'm Took. I come under An Influence'".(128) Scobie himself cannot understand his strange behaviour when he is under such an influence. "'I don't know what comes over me'",(129) he shamefacedly reveals to Darley, "'I slip on female duds and my Dolly Varden'".(130) Putting on female clothes and his 'Dolly Varden', a greasy old cloche hat, and a pair of antediluvian court shoes with very high heels,

Scobie hunts for male lovers. Ironically he dies dressed up in these very clothes when a group of sailors, thinking him a tart, attack him at a seaport. Nevertheless, Scobie is an integral part of the city as "no mythology of the city would be complete without its Scobie".(131) After his death, his tomb is turned into a shrine visited by both Moslems and Christians.

Pursewarden is seen with girls in his flat and could afford to be convivial; Clea fancies him as a lover; Melissa sleeps with him, disclosing Nessim's political conspiracy; later, in Balthazar, he is identified as the person whom Justine really loves. In addition to that, he is married and has two children, (though later it is revealed that, while he and his wife are separated, they still correspond affectionately). The second volume discloses an incestuous relation with his blind sister Liza, which gives a final cause for his suicide. He, like Justine, is a worshipper of the cult of Dionysus. Meeting Darley one night in a little tin pissotière in the main square by the tram-station, Pursewarden, drunk, confides to him the secret of his trade:

> 'Let me', he said in a maudlin tone
> 'confide in you the secret of my novelist's
> trade. I am a success, you a failure. The
> answer, old man, is sex and plenty of it!. (132)

Capodistria is another incurable womanizer who is nicknamed Da Capo by his friends "because of a sexual prowess reputed to be as great as his fortune - or his ugliness".(133) He spends his time looking for a new prey, a woman to his choice, but nobody is offended in such a place:

> He sits all day on the terrace of the Brokers' Club watching the women pass, with the restless eye of someone endlessly shuffling through an old soiled pack of cards. From time to time there is a flick, like a chameleon's tongue striking - a signal almost invisible to the inattentive....Sometimes his agents will quite openly stop and importune women on the street in his name, mentioning a sum of money. No one is offended by the mention of money in our city. (134)

It is the licentiousness of the city which does not permit such actions to be offensive. A Greek and, according to Durrell, a true descendent of the founders of the city, Capodistria has the knack of turning every object he sees into a woman; "under his eyes chairs become painfully conscious of their bare legs. He impregnates things. At table I have seen a water-melon become conscious under his gaze so that it felt the seeds inside it stirring with life".(135)

Capodistria's father, his nearest ancestor, was a great womanizer as well, as Da Capo himself reveals:

> 'When he was very old he had a model of the perfect woman built in rubber-life-size. She could be filled with hot water in the winter. She was strikingly beautiful. He called her Sabina after his mother, and took her everywhere ... Sabina had a wonderful wardrobe. It was a sight to see them come into the dining saloon, dressed for dinner'. (136)

The hump-back barber, Mnemjian,has his jovial side of pleasure-seeking. His deformity is a main attraction:

> He is rumoured to be fantastically attractive to women and he is said to have put away a small fortune earned for him by his admirers. But he also has several elderly Egyptian ladies, the wives and widows of pashas, as permanent clients upon whom he calls at regular intervals to set their hair. They have, as he says slyly, 'got beyond everything' - and reaching up over his back to touch the unsightly hump which crowns it, he adds with pride: 'This excites them'. (137)

He also procures women for his customers, though insists on handling the money himself:

> Leaning over Pombal's moon-like face
> he will say, for example... 'I have
> something for you - something special'. (138)

Narouz's sensuality is sadistic since he derives great pleasure out of the most cruel actions; his gleeful reaction towards his most beastly crimes seems to come so naturally to him as an inherent trait in his personality. Carrying a bag and smiling shyly to Nessim, Narouz explains that he is hiding something in his bag, which proves to be a head of a human being, a troublesome Beduin whom Narouz has disposed of. His sensuality is symbolized in his meeting with the prostitute, in the episode of buying a horse, and in his cruelty in killing bats with his hippopotamus-hide whip. In Balthazar Narouz, chuckling happily, asks Nessim, who was paying a visit to Karm Abu Girg, if he would like to see his new whip at work, but

> without waiting for an answer he tucked his
> head down and rode forward at a trot, to where
> some dozen chicken were scratching at the bare
> ground near a herdsman's cot. A frightened
> rooster running faster than the others took
> off under his horse's hooves... Narouz' arm
> shot up, the long lash uncurled slowly on the
> air and then went rigid with a sudden dull
> well of sound, a sullen thwack, and laughing,
> the rider dismounted to pick up the mutilated
> creature, still warm and palpitating, its
> wings half-severed from its body, its head
> smashed. He brought it back to Nessim in
> triumph, wiping his hand casually on his baggy
> trousers. (139)

Such heterogeneous people are the characters presented by Durrell in his Quartet. They are all dictated by the landscape and conform to the ancient spirit of place. They fit into Durrell's imaginary city of Alexandria, moved and directed

by an overwhelming unknown power, but they do not conform to the actual city. It is absurd then to reiterate the reality of the place, for to assume such realism would create a further problem of finding characters in discordance with their locality.

Yet Durrell's description of local festivals is mentioned by critics as a good illustration of presenting the locality out of his own experience. The following chapter will therefore attempt to reveal Durrell's indebtedness to other sources to portray the locality.

CHAPTER IV

SOURCES OF LOCAL DESCRIPTIONS IN THE ALEXANDRIAN QUARTET

Durrell's adoption of typical Western views of the East, especially of the attitudes of many orientalists who have written about the East, goes further than the word "influence" usually implies. His most acclaimed passages, the descriptions of the local festivals and local quarters, are often quoted by critics to illustrate how truthful the novelist is in portraying the locality. Indeed one critic, after reading Balthazar, exclaimed that the novel "throbs with such insistence upon reality".(1) On the other hand, the argument in this chapter will reveal how his colourful, exotic descriptions are directly borrowed from other sources without ever specifying these sources. The Quartet is in effect a collage made up of borrowed material. This seems to be Durrell's method in other works as well; referring to The Revolt of Aphrodite, Durrell admits to Mark Alyn:

> Basically there is nothing original in the book. Everything is pinched! Except the way the ideas are set out. (2)

Durrell refers to Edward Lane's book as his basic source for the descriptions of Egyptian customs and manners in his novels, but his description of local festivals also owes a great deal to J.W. McPherson's The Moulids of Egypt, an important source he never refers to. A few similar passages from both authors will be cited to show Durrell's unacknowledged indebtedness to McPherson as a direct influence of an orientalist on him; the comparison will pinpoint the type of literary plagiarism he has attempted to disguise.

The second novel of the Quartet, Balthazar, deals with the local Alexandrian scene, partly through the eyes of Balthazar who is supposed to know it better than Darley, and the reader becomes involved in the scenery as he follows Narouz meandering through the various colourful booths set up especially for a local festival, a moulid:

> At every festival or mulid the circumcision booth was a regular part of the festivities. Huge coloured pictures, heavily beflagged with the national colours, depicting barber-surgeons with pen-knives at work upon wretched youths spread out in dentists' chairs were a normal if bizarre feature of the side-shows. The doyen of the guild was Mahmoud himself, a large oval man, with a long oiled moustache... He always made a resounding speech in classical Arabic offering circumcision free to the faithful who were too poor to meet the cost of it. Then, when a few candidates were forthcoming, pushed forward by eager parents, his two negro clowns with painted faces and grotesque clothes used to gambol out to amuse and distract the boys, inveigling them by this means into the fatal chair where they were...'hyphenated', their screams being drowned by the noise of the crowd, almost before they knew what was happening. (3)

The reader, thrilled and fascinated by the apparent accuracy of the description, would hardly be aware of the source. Here is McPherson's description from which the above is adapted:

> I have already referred to the circumcision booths, and the barbers' shops temporarily converted into such, to be seen at all big moulids near the mosque or tomb. They can be recognised at once by the large picture sign. Ritual mutilation is performed on both sexes, certainly with wonderful skill and speed, and success, for a few piastres, or quite gratis with the very poor... The doyen of the faculty, "Dr" Mahmud Enayat-Allah... has a gorgeous booth there with innumerable coloured lamps and decorations, and entertains his friends, clients and visitors freely, and displays the same sumptuousness at some other moulids, notably at Tanta where black "Sambos" in their war paint to amuse the little victims by their antics and tarturs and other lures... before they fully realise why they have been so brought into the lime-light. (4)

Durrell's passage is directly derived from McPherson's since the main substance is the same, though the novelist has turned it into an elaborate, bizarre and visually vivid vignette. Thus "the large picture sign" becomes "huge coloured pictures, heavily beflagged with the national colours". The "doyen" of the trade in both passages is Mahmoud Enayat-Allah, but Durrell gives a physical description of him, inspired perhaps by an unidentified illustration in McPherson's book: "a large oval man, with a long oiled moustache, always dressed in full fig and apart from his red tarbrush conveying the vague impression of some French country practitioner on French leave". Yet, in spite of the place and occasion of the gathering, the doyen in Balthazar speaks in classical Arabic, which is most unlikely on such an occasion. Moreover, as Durrell perhaps did not know the meaning of tarturs, (Arabic for a cone-hat), this word is omitted and replaced by a larger than life, grotesque description.

Durrell harps on the subject of ritual circumcision which attracts him as bizarre and exotic, though it is commonplace to both Moslems and Jews, and he manipulates it in different ways, building up a number of anecdotes to create an effect. In Sauve Qui Peut, a short book containing sketches from diplomatic life narrated in satiric style, Durrell describes in the first sketch, "Sauve Qui Peut", a bizarre incident based on the idea of circumcision among Kurdish inhabitants. The denouement is, however, a reversal of what is expected, since the victim-to-be" turns out to be a westernized man in his twenties who rejects his people's beliefs for more "civilized" ones. In Balthazar Scobie quarrels with his servant Abdul when he decides

to take up circumcision in his barber's shop, and actually does so under the master of the trade "Dr." Mahmoud Enayat Allah.

Again in Balthazar another trade is mentioned, tattooing:

> A little to one side, rapt in the performance of his trade sat a cousin of Mahmoud, tattooing the breast of a magnificent-looking male prostitute whose oiled curls hung down his back and whose eyes and lips were heavily painted. A glass panel of great brilliance hung beside him, painted with a selection of designs from which his clients could choose - purely geometric for Moslems, or Texts, or the record of a vow, or simply beloved names. (5)

The above passage is taken from the following:

> Near the circumcision booths we see a minor but equally permanent act of mutilation going on, - tattooing. This is done with great expertise and is interesting, and perhaps still more so the framed pictures of designs painted on glass from which to choose - purely geometrical for the strict Moslem, or Qoranic texts in suluth characters, or a name and address, or the record of a vow... (I once saw an effeminate long-haired youth, whom Lane would have certainly classified as a "gink" being tattooed with the names of his patrons). (6)

Here Durrell in the first passage turns McPherson's straightforward episode about tattooing into a more artistic, though exaggerated, narrative. The cousin of Mahmoud is seen "rapt in the performance"; McPherson's effeminate long-haired youth" becomes "a magnificent-looking male prostitute". McPherson borrows the vulgar Turkish word "ginks" from Lane who describes them as a class of male dancers who are generally Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Turks. Durrell, a wonderful flirt with words picked up from others, makes use of the Turkish word and of the nature of the description in another context in Balthazar when he portrays Clea and her city:

> The Ginks were abroad with their long oiled plaits and tinselled clothes; the faces of black angels; the men-women of the suburbs. (7)

It is clear this word was not in use during the period when the Quartet is set, as McPherson only refers to Lane's use of the word. On the other hand, in the above passage on "tattooing" from McPherson's book, Durrell avoids one word, "suluth", an epithet describing a particular script of Arabic; this is indicative of his unfamiliarity with the language. This is simply replaced by "Texts" which sounds ambiguous, but could perhaps be accepted by a Western reader as part of the ambiguity or queerness of the whole atmosphere.

In Balthazar, Narouz, while visiting a Coptic festival, the moulid of Sitna Mariam (St. Mary), is seen

> stopping for a while to hear the storytellers, or to buy a lucky talisman from the famous blind preacher Hussein who stood like an oak tree, magnificent in the elf-light, reciting the ninety-nine holy names. (8)

McPherson, describing the Moslem festival of Sitna Ayesha, refers to the preacher:

> A feature, when I was there, was the blind Hag Husein preaching near the old city gate. He used very good Arabic, and was gentle and restrained. After his discourse he repeated the ninety-nine names of God, and wrote the name of anyone so desiring on an illuminated text, of which he carried a sheaf. (9)

McPherson's passage describes a "Hag", a Moslem pilgrim who has been to Mecca and thus a holyman who is "gentle and restrained", who after preaching asks if any of his listeners would desire a text of the ninety-nine names of God according to Moslems - Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Generous, and so on. He also gives the list of the above to those who ask for it, either in return for a penny or less,

or quite free. To give his narrative a mysterious colour, Durrell first changes the nature of the preacher from being a pilgrim into a talisman vendor, and then renders him larger-than-life: "stood like an oak tree, magnificent in the elf-light". The list containing the names of God becomes a "lucky talisman". McPherson is describing a Moslem festival, Durrell a Coptic one.

McPherson goes on to describe another moulid, Zein el-Abdin, where he comes across a Magzub from Upper Egypt:

> In the qarafa, not many yards from the great door of the dareh, through which there was a perpetual passing of a crowd of pilgrims to and from the inner maqam, a gaunt and terrible creature fascinated literally an immense ring of people. He was a Magzub from Upper Egypt: in the army once, I was told, now a religious maniac: and never have I met in real life, a being with such a powerful and terrible personality. (10)

Durrell adapts this passage to describe the Magzub whom Narouz meets. In McPherson's version the crowd of pilgrims is passing to and fro, either to visit or to depart from the holy shrine which belongs to a sacred sheikh in the necropolis. In Balthazar the crowd is gathered together and is greatly influenced by the Magzub. Narouz, awe-stricken, approaches the crowd:

> Somewhere ahead of him in the darkness lay a small cluster of abandoned shrines shadowed by leaning palms, and here the gaunt and terrible figure of the famous religious maniac stood, shooting out the thunderbolts of hypnotic personality on to a fearful but fascinated crowd. (11)

In the above passages, though the basic ingredients are the same, Durrell modifies McPherson somewhat in borrowing from him. McPherson describes the Magzub as "a gaunt and terrible creature"; Durrell describes him as "the gaunt and terrible figure"; they

both describe him as a "religious maniac". What Durrell calls his "hypnotic personality" is again taken from McPherson: "he was a born witch doctor, and now and again smelt out a heretic or a pious fraud, and hypnotised him on the spot".(12) The setting of the scene is the same in both descriptions, but whereas McPherson carefully creates the exact setting by using a few suggestive words in Arabic (qarafa is a cemetery; dareh is the tomb of a sheikh with a dome attached to it; and maqam is the shrine of a sheikh about which a moulid centres), Durrell gives the setting in general terms: "a small cluster of abandoned shrines".

The two following passages reveal Durrell's dependence on McPherson to convey the local scene. McPherson goes on to describe the Magzub and his ring:

> Sometimes the ring was like a spot on the island of Circe, bodies with the head bent back nearly to earth, or circulating upside-down on all fours and looking like scorpions, or bleating cries for mercy in ovine voices, or in the attitude of an ass carrying the magzub on their backs or shoulders, whilst he himself emitted sounds which were anything but human, roars, grunts, and animal notes indescribable. When he took a new victim in hand, he generally fixed him with fierce wild eyes, and with fingers vibrating like claws asked him, - "Are you laughing at me?" - ... Without waiting for a reply... he seized him by the hair, nose, or any member, swung him into the ring, made a few more rapid passes with his hand and if necessary again used his eyes and voice on him, and then at once proceeded to the Circe transformations. (13)

Durrell adapts this in an attempt to convey a slice of life at a local festival in Balthazar:

> The holy man stood in an island of the fallen bodies of those he had hypnotized, some screaming or bleating like goats, some braying. From time to time he would leap upon one of them uttering hideous screams and ride him across the ring,

> thrashing at his buttocks like a maniac, and then suddenly turning, with the foam bursting from between his teeth, he would dart into the crowd and pick upon some unfortunate victim, shouting: 'Are you mocking me?' and catching him by his nose or an ear or an arm, drag him with super-human force into the ring where with a sudden quick pass of his talons he would 'kill his light'. (14)

Here again in describing the Magzub and his ring Durrell takes the spirit of McPherson's passage and renders it in his own text as a pseudo life-like picture derived from a first hand experience. McPherson gives a vivid description of the people in the ring: "bodies...circulating upside-down on all fours and looking like scorpions". This is more visual than Durrell's: "some crawling about like scorpions". The expression "'Are you laughing at me?'" becomes "'Are you mocking me?'" The great similarity between the two passages is so obvious that it does not need enlarging upon.

McPherson probably gained much of his information from Lane whose work is characterized by its serious scholarly attempt to accumulate material, both facts and fiction, about the Egyptians more than a century ago. Among the facts is that Egyptians used to wear different head-gear to distinguish their religion: Jews, Christians and Moslems. A group of distinguished Moslems who were direct descendents from Prophet Mohammad used to wear green head-gear and would thus be respected on account of their religious status and were called Al-Ashraf (the noblemen). However, this situation is very unlikely to have existed when McPherson was writing, and is most probably borrowed from Lane's account. McPherson reports:

> The last occult triumph I witnessed was the

> subjugation of a highly respectable-looking sheikh, wearing a green turban, proclaiming him to be of the seed of the prophet. He was walking past our ring at some distance, but the witch-doctor dashed through the people and had him into the charmed circule in a flash, tearing off his green aama, and accusing him of being a false Sharif, and daring to approach Zein el-Abdin whilst "niggis" (in a state of ceremonial impurity). (15)

Durrell makes use of this passage to give a round picture of the Magzub:

> A respectable-looking sheik with the green turban which proclaimed him to be of the seed of the Prophet was walking across the outskirts of the crowd when the Magzub caught sight of him and with flying robes burst through the crowd to the old man's side, shouting: 'He is impure'. (16)

The humiliation of the "Sharif", and the powerful and magnetic personality of the Magzub are recounted in The Moulids of Egypt:

> With flashing eyes, the "Sharif" indignantly expostulated, but he met other eyes, and his went dull, and his face expressionless, and his voice lapsed into aposiopesis; and after many antics worthy of Qara Goz, at word of command he was down and grunting on all fours... We all appealed to the Magzub to desist, to which he responded making a few counter passes, and thrusting the Sharif out of the ring with words that sounded like an absolution. (17)

Durrell follows almost the same sequence of events as in McPherson when describing this incident in the Quartet as if it was out of his own experience:

> The old Sheik turned upon his accuser with angry eyes and started to expostulate, but the fanatic thrust his face close to him and sank those terrible eyes into him. The old Sheik suddenly went dull, his head wobbled on his neck and with a shout the Magzub had him down on all fours, grunting like a boar, and dragged him by the turban to hurt him among the others. 'Enough' cried the crowd,

> outraged at this indifference to a man of holiness, but the Magzub twisted round and with flickering fingers rushed back towards the crowd, shrieking: 'Who cries "enough", who cries "enough"?' (18)

Using the first-person narrative McPherson reports how he was able to converse with the "Sharif":

> Out of curiosity, I followed the "Sharif", and got into conversation with him, asking him the name of the Magzub. He said he did not know, though he had seen him once before, and he was "a very good man". "But", I said, "what he has just put you through must have been dreadful for you". "Anything but dreadful", he replied, - "I love a Zikr". And he looked at me with an expression of great surprise, as though entirely unconscious of his recent canine, ovine, porcine and Punch-like variants. (19)

In order to convey the effect of the incident on the sheikh, Durrell substitutes Narouz for the narrator in McPherson's text who is McPherson himself. The sheikh in Durrell's text speaks highly as well of the Magzub when he is approached by Narouz:

> Narouz came to his side as he was readjusting his turban and dusting his robes. He saluted him and asked him the name of the Magzub, but the old sheik did not know. 'But he is a very good man, a holy man' he said. (20)

After the above incident, and still narrating in the first person, McPherson tells of his meditation in tranquillity:

> Seated on a tombstone to meditate the strange beauty of the surroundings, the whispering of veiled women - vaguely seen - came to me, with the sound of zikrs, and the singing or droning of holy men, and the animal cries of the untiring magzub. (21)

A similar but a more sombre effect is conveyed by Durrell when Narouz goes back to the tombstone,

> to meditate on the beauty of surroundings and to wait until he might approach the Magzub whose

> animal shrieks still sounded upon the night,
> piercing the blank hubbub of the fair and the
> drone of the holy men from some nearby shrine.
> He had as yet not decided how best to deal
> with the strange personage of the darkness.
> He waited upon the event, meditating. (22)

McPherson and his companions come across some freaks, and he mentions in passing "Zubeida, of sixty years, and less than half that number of inches, the calf with five legs, on which she has been going strong for quite fifteen years and does not look a day older".(23) In like manner Narouz passes through the freaks and sees "(Zubeida the bearded woman and the calf with five legs)".(24) McPherson recounts further "a queer sight" he witnessed in 1933: "it was a procession of gaily decorated carts bearing the prostitutes of the town with their admirers, with much music and song".(25) This is mentioned in the context of describing Moulid Sayed El-Badawi, a holy shrine at Tanta. During such festivals it is normal to this day to see a group of common people in Egypt taking a horse-driven cart and going to their destination; being in festive mood, they would sing while the cart is moving. McPherson's report cannot be trustworthy, especially as Lane mentions much earlier that "public female dancing and prostitution were prohibited by the government in the beginning of June 1834".(26) Though Durrell admits in an interview that there were no brothels in Alexandria during his time there, he writes of prostitutes as if they were a commonplace feature of Alexandria. Furthermore, making use of McPherson's account, he elaborates the picture to the point of the macabre:

> A cart filled with the prostitutes of the
> Arab town in coloured robes went by with
> shrill screams and shouts, and the singing

> of painted young men to the gnash of cymbals and scribbling of mandolines: the whole as gorgeous as a tropical animal. (27)

The abundance of unlikely incidents and episodes attributed to the local people of Alexandria, in addition to the misuse of Arabic words, either by means of malapropism or by using incorrect Arabic words, confirmsthe opinion that Durrell gained most of his information of the place through other sources and not from his own experience.

As the Quartet's gestation period took place away from Alexandria, Durrell may in any case have forgotten its local colour, substituting European pseudo-orientalism for true Egyptianness. Clea, commenting on the tragic boat accident of Pombal and Fosca, is made to say

> I suppose it must have been her blood splashed upon the expensive white espadrilles which he had bought a week before at Ghoshen's Emporium. (28)

"Ghoshen's Emporium" is an Anglo-Indian name which is likely to be found in Commonwealth countries like India and Pakistan, but most unlikely to be found in Egypt. Nessim's daughter has got an amah,(29) an old and obsolete word for a slave-woman, but also a current Anglo-Indian name for a wet nurse, used especially in Madras and Bombay, though not in Egypt. Again, Mountolive eats "hot pilaff",(30) described as a local dish. It is true that this is an oriental dish, but it is not an Egyptian one.

Durrell seems to have a knack for misusing Arabic words and here are a few examples: Abba(31) is used in several places in the Quartet, and also in Monsieur, for Abbaya (a

cloak); the word pelm[32] has no existence in Arabic as the letter "p" is non-existent in the Arabic alphabet; Café Al Aktar[33] - the more - and Café Al Bab[34] - the door - are two extremely improbable names for a café. Arak[35] is an oriental alcoholic drink made out of dates, mostly in Iraq, but it is not a typical Egyptian drink. Both tibbin[36] - which means "hay" and not corn as he explains - and kurbash[37] - a whip - are transliterated with non-Egyptian pronunciation and should be pronounced and written as tibn and kurbag. Mahubbah[38] is a malapropism for marhaba (welcome). Darley, referring to the sugar figurines sold during a religious festival, calls them correctly arusas,[39] but when he attempts a translation of the word he gives the wrong meaning. Arusa, as McPherson himself explains, is "a word which means bride and which may also indicate a doll".[40] In Durrell's context it means "doll" but he translates it as "bride". Balthazar tells Darley: "I've betted Clea a thousand piastres we have a thunderstorm by this afternoon";[41] no one would have said this since it would be like saying a thousand pence in England, but Durrell uses the word "piastres" merely to give a local effect as "ten pounds" would sound commonplace. Darley remembers Justine "sitting alone by the sea, reading a newspaper and eating an apple";[42] apples are not a typical local fruit and so the description enhances the picture of a cosmopolitan Alexandria regardless of the local scene. A similar analogy would be to describe someone in England sitting beside the Thames and eating mangoes, for instance. Narouz tells Nessim: "I have been promised an Arab and I want to break it myself";[43] this is inappropriate as it is most unlikely for someone to refer to a

horse in an Arab country as an "Arab". Arabic is a rich language, well-known for its vast range of proverbs, yet the few Arabic proverbs used in the text (pp.98, 142, 828) are very stupid, rude and uncharacteristic of the spirit of place.

McPherson mentions two popular folk tales, one of which is "Hassan Abu Ali Saraq el Meeza" (Hassan Abu Ali Stole the Goat), an adventure tale; another is "Aziza and Yunis" (Aziza being a girl and Yunis a man), which is a popular love tale. Durrell takes the names of the second tale and changes their sex, arriving at "Aziz", a possible name for a man, and "Yuna", a non-existent name for a girl. The two tales are further confused together when Justine accompanies Pursewarden to the brothel where she first saw her child lying dead. There the poor children gather around her while she tells them a story:

> "Ah, listen to me, all ye true believers,
> and I will unfold to you the story of Yuna
> and Aziz, of their great many petalled love,
> and of the mishaps which befell them from
> the doing of Abu Ali Saraq el-Maza". (44)

This incident might arouse the compassion of the European reader who is not aware of the unintentional incongruity and burlesque contained in the passage, but it has a ridiculous, comic effect for an Egyptian or for any reader aware of the local folklore. The same effect is felt at the description of Narouz's funeral, where the incident sounds exotic whereas in actuality it is unconvincing and most unlikely:

> Bedsteads, cupboards, sofas were propelled out upon the balcony and hurled from there into the courtyard. At each new crash a fresh fever of screaming - the long bubbling zagreet - would break out and be answered from every corner of the house. Now the mirrors were shivered into

> a thousand fragments, the pictures turned back to front, the carpets reversed. All the china and glass in the house - save for the ceremonial black coffee set which was kept for funerals - was now broken up, trampled on, shivered to atoms... The domestic furnishings of the house were completely wrecked now, and everything that remained had been covered in black drapes. (45)

To begin with "zagreet" (or, more correctly, zaghareet) are tongue-trills expressing joy and are thus used during weddings and other happy occasions, but they are used here erroneously by Durrell to express mourning. This seems to be borrowed from Lane who, when describing a funeral of a holy man at that time, wrote:

> A welee is further honoured in his funeral by a remarkable custom. Women follow his bier, but instead of wailing, as they would after the corpse of an ordinary mortal, they rend the air with the shrill and quavering cries of joy called "zaghareet". (46)

Lane's account was in reference to the funeral rites of a Moslem sheikh during the 1830s when he wrote his book. If Durrell meant to give Narouz a holy treatment, which is very doubtful, the passage would be both anachronistic and inappropriate. However, Durrell seems to be confused about the true meaning of the word, which he attempts to explain a little earlier in the narrative:

> They were uttering that curious and thrilling ululation which is called the zagreet. (47)

Lane reports that during his time "when the master of the house, or the owner of the furniture, is dead, they also turn upside-down the carpets, mats, cushions and coverings of the deewáns".(48) To imagine then that all furniture and other belongings of the deceased were completely wrecked, as Durrell describes in the passage, is utterly absurd and illogical.

Moreover, in a later passage, the people who come to pay their condolences to the mourners simply whisper "Ma-a-lesh" (never mind), which comes as an anticlimax following the exaggerated state of grief described.

Durrell falls into anachronism when he borrows indiscriminately from Lane, especially concerning the funeral rites. An instance of this is the description of the frenzied dance of women relatives round Narouz's dead body. Here is Durrell's description:

> The women were dancing now as they circled the body, striking their breasts and howling, but dancing in the slow measured figures of a dance recaptured from long forgotten friezes upon the tombs of the ancient world. They moved and swayed, quivering from throat to ankles, and they twisted and turned calling upon the dead man to rise. 'Rise, my despair! Rise, my death! Rise, my golden one, my death, my camel, my protector! O beloved body full of seed, arise!' ... Round and round they moved, hypnotized by their own lamentations. (49)

Lane describes in his book the Moslem funeral rites of his time, which were, however, obsolete more than a century later. The above passage seems to be adapted from Lane:

> the women of the family raise the cries of lamentations called "welwel'eh" or "wilwál", uttering the most piercing shrieks and calling upon the name of the deceased. The most common cries that are heard on the death of the master of a family from the lips of his wife, or wives, and children are, "O my master!" "O my camel!" ... The women continue their lamentations, and many of the females of the neighbourhood...come to unite with them in this melancholy task. (50)

In another passage, however, Lane mentions the ritual dance:

> It is customary among the peasants of Upper Egypt for the female relations and friends of a person deceased to meet together by his house on each of the first three days after the funeral, and there to perform a lamentation and a strange kind of dance. (51)

Another disastrous confusion occurs when Durrell applies a pure Moslem belief to a Copt. According to Lane, Moslems believed that

> the first night after the burial is called "Leylet el-whasheh" (or the Night of Desolation), the place of the deceased being then left desolate... As the soul is believed to remain with the body during the first night after the burial, and then to depart to the place appointed for the residence of good souls until the last day, or to the appointed prison in which wicked souls await their final doom, this night is also called "Leylet el-Wahdeh (or the Night of Solitude). (52)

At the marquee of Narouz's funeral Durrell describes the mourning visitors who "would come and sit through the whole of the 'Night of Loneliness'".(53) It is hardly likely that Christians would have the same beliefs as Moslems concerning the first night of the burial, even during Lane's time. It seems that at one stage Durrell was confused about the Copts, believing them to be a distinguished sect of Moslems. When later he came to know that a Copt is an Egyptian Christian he could not undertake the necessary alteration. He keeps repeating, however, that some people do not understand that a Copt is a Christian. Nevertheless, the Quartet abounds with such confusions. In one instance he writes that Alexandria is not a safe place for Christians(54) but at the funeral of Narouz Moslems and Christians become strangely amalgamated in their customs and beliefs. During the mourning of Narouz's death, a Moslem headmaster, Mohammed Shebab, who is a friend of the family, asks for the recitation of a chapter of the Koran: "'Ask Alam the singer to sing the recitative of the Image of Women once more, please'".(55) It is exceedingly unlikely for the Koran to be recited during a Christian funeral, besides

which the word "Image" here is an incorrect translation of Surat, Arabic for a chapter in the Koran, which is confused with surat, Arabic for "image" or "picture".

The Quartet teems with improbable incidents. The beadles who come from the Coptic Church to wash Narouz's dead body "could find nothing in Narouz' shabby wardrobe which seemed an adequate recompense for the trouble".(56) The only clothes they found were "a few old cloaks and boots, a torn nightshirt, and a small embroidered cap which dated from his circumcision - that was all Narouz owned".(57) It is most unlikely that Nessim and Balthazar would put on the dead man's tattered clothes and give the two beadles their own respectable ones to persuade the two "ignorant louts" who refused to wash Narouz to accomplish their job. Narouz was not a common peasant, but an exceptionally rich man who owned horses and who used to go to the Carnival once a year dressed in his best clothes. Another unlikely incident is the burial of Narouz's great bloodstained whip which Balthazar, finding no jewels or rich costumes to bury with the corpse, coiled and placed under his pillow. The next morning, however, a superstitious incident is discovered:

> The next morning the servants were to carry in the body of a wretch whose whole face had been pulped by the blows of this singular weapon; he had run, it seems, screaming, unrecognizable, across the plantation to fall insensible in a dyke and drown. So thoroughly had the whip done its work that he was unidentified. (58)

As a matter of fact, such incidents belong to Gothic stories. Here Durrell makes use of Lane's belief that the Arabs believe in superstitions, and that they believe in the existence of spirits in physical form, which is not true. Lane spreads the

heretical belief that, according to Arabs, spirits

> eat and drink, propagate their species (like, or in conjunction with, human beings), and are subject to death, though they generally live many centuries. (59)

Does Durrell want the reader to believe that Narouz has fallen into the hands of evil spirits who whipped his corpse to the extent of mutilation and unidentification?

It is clear that Durrell derived his material from different sources in order to create an exotic atmosphere, heedless of reality. Because of his unrealistic treatment, Durrell's achievement could be classified as a romance but not as a novel. Clara Reeve points out the need for a distinction between these two kinds of fiction, defining the difference thus:

> The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things. - The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. - The Novel gives a familiar relation to such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves. (60)

The confusion between the Romance and the Novel is due to the loose definition of "novel", which is generally defined as "a prose fiction of a certain extent". For that reason writers have attempted, since the birth of the novel, to explain and clarify the nature and characteristics of the novel. W.M. Thackeray stressed the necessity for truthful representation in the novel. He wrote to David Masson expressing this view:

> The Art of Novels <u>is</u> to represent Nature: to convey as strongly as possible the sentiment

> of reality - in a tragedy or a poem or a lofty drama you aim at producing different emotions; the figures moving, and their words sounding, heroically: but in a drawing room drama a coat is a coat, and a poker a poker; and must be nothing else according to my ethics, not an embroidered tunic, nor a great red-hot instrument like the Pantomime weapon. (61)

Thackeray is considered a realist and in his Vanity Fair (1847-8) he exposes the worldliness of his age. He was following a tradition, for Jane Austen before him had been praised for her vivid portrayal of the social life and conditions of her time. Commenting on Jane Austen's Emma, Sir Walter Scott describes the kind of realism she presents in her novels:

> the author of Emma confines herself chiefly to the middling classes of society; her most distinguished characters do not rise greatly above well-bred country gentlemen and ladies; and those which are sketched with most originality and precision, belong to a class rather below that standard. The narrative of all her novels is composed of such common occurrences as may have fallen under the observation of most folks; and her dramatis personae conduct themselves upon the motives and principles which the readers may recognize as ruling their own and that of most of their acquaintances. (62)

Such is the kind of realism which Jane Austen represents and which was a principal characteristic of the mainstream of the English novel, especially during the Victorian period.

A "romancer", on the other hand, deals with extravagant incidents rather than reality; he has a tendency to delight in fancifulness and falsehood, and he usually indulges in highly imaginary stories. The eighteenth-century Gothic novel abounds in such imaginative fantasy, with its interest in the supernatural, and its treatment of ruins, haunted castles, frightening landscapes and magic. The reader does not expect such a

writer to tell the truth, but indulge in fanciful stories. As Sir Philip Sidney wrote in An Apology for Poetry, such a writer "lieth not":

> Though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not... So think I none so simple would say that Aesop lied in the tales of his beasts; for who thinks that Aesop writ it for actually true were well worthy to have his name chronicled among the beasts he writeth of. (63)

What Durrell has mistakingly emphasized is the reality and historical verisimilitude of the city of Alexandria in the four volumes of The Alexandria Quartet. Even critics who defend his work as an act of creative reality feel at a loss at Durrell's reiterated claim for the factual reality of the city.

Critics, deceived by Durrell's extensive borrowing from and adaptations of other sources to give a local colour, have thought he got his material through first-hand experience, and that he should therefore be considered a realist. By pinpointing the many improbable episodes and unlikely incidents, and by exposing Durrell's heavy indebtedness to other writers about Egypt and the ways in which he adapts such material, it is possible to illustrate how far he deviates from the track pursued by traditional realistic novelists since the emergence of the English novel with Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. Durrell is not a realist. In The Art of Fiction, Henry James stresses the novelist's commitment to representational reality when he writes: "the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life".(64) In departing so far from ordinary life, Durrell reveals himself to be a "romancer".

CHAPTER V

OTHER INFLUENCES: EINSTEIN, ELIOT AND FREUD

The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed an intellectual unheaval in more than one field: Albert Einstein, for example, in the field of mathematics with his revolutionary theory of relativity; the artistic revolt againt Romanticism, exemplified by T.S. Eliot's early poetry and criticism, culminating in his famous poem The Waste Land; and Sigmund Freud's lectures on psychoanalysis. These, among other things, were major influences on the thought and art of the period as a whole, and these, among other things, were major influences on Lawrence Durrell and his work, his early work in particular.

This chapter will attempt to illustrate the influences of Einstein, Eliot and Freud, respectively, on Lawrence Durrell. To illustrate these influences, reference will be made to three works by Durrell in particular: His only book of criticism, The Key to Modern British Poetry, which contains Durrell's theories of art and his critical appreciation of the prevalent trends developed later in other works; his first significant novel, The Black Book, an immature work, but one in which Durrell first "heard his own voice" - the book contains, in embryonic form, most of the ideas in his major novel, The Alexandria Quartet; finally, extensive reference will be made to the Quartet itself, Durrell's greatest achievement so far and the meeting point of all the threads of his previous work, here gathered together to contribute to the creation of a major work of art.

Durrell first came to England in 1923, at a time when Einstein's theory of relativity was causing an upheaval in the world of science, undermining Newtonian theoretical principles. In demolishing Newton's basic assumption that time is absolute, that it is universally the same and that it flows steadily from the past towards the future, Einstein used the following illustration: an observer standing next to a railroad embankment sees two bolts of lightning strike the tracks at the same time and thus concludes that they occurred simultaneously, one far to the east, the other an equal distance to the west. Just as the bolts hit, a second observer passes directly in front of him on a train moving at high speed from east to west. To the second observer, the bolts do not seem to strike simultaneously. The reason is that, because he is moving away from the bolt in the east, its light takes slightly longer to reach him. Similarly, because he is moving towards the bolt in the west, its light reaches him earlier. Thus what the stationary observer sees as simultaneous lightning flashes appear to the moving observer as a flash in the west followed by one in the east. If, on the other hand, the bolts had struck at different times, it could well have been the moving observer who saw them simultaneously and the man along the tracks who thought that they did not occur at the same time.

From his statements in The Key to Modern British Poetry, it is obvious that Durrell believes that art should imitate science and that scientific experiments and theories can be successfully applied to creative art. In his Key Durrell states:

> Today all the arts and sciences seem to be differentiated from one another, but this is really an illusion born of faulty critical method. In ancient Greece mathematics, music, poetry and sculpture were intimately connected and the systems of education then in vogue recognized the fact. Today we still acknowledge this underground connection between the arts and sciences when we find ourselves using phrases like 'a man of his age' or 'the prevailing currents of thought'. (1)

Durrell's belief in a close connection between science and the arts has led him to explore further the artistic possibilities of the three dimensions of space and the one of time in the form of Einstein's space-time continuum, a theory emphasizing relative and subjective vision, thus preventing us from reaching any absolute reality:

> ... our observations are dogged by the subjective element. Man is simply a box labelled personality. He peers out of the box through five slits, the senses. On this earth he is permitted access to three dimensions of space and one of time. Only in his imagination can he inhabit the whole - a reality which is beyond the reach of intellectual qualifications: a reality which even the greatest art is incapable of rendering in its full grandeur. (2)

The collaboration between the arts and science, then, is essential in order to avoid a single subjective - and thus one-sided - dimension of a four-sided picture. As man's capacities are limited, his judgment and evaluation are influenced by a subjective perspective, and ultimate reality is difficult to attain. Therefore, according to Durrell, what we call 'real' is only relative reality, necessarily limited by our human access to limited dimensions of space and time on this earth.

In the above example of Einstein's, both men are right, as measurements of time depend on the choice of the reference frame - in this case, the train or the point along the tracks.

Durrell's main purpose, however, is to show that "there is no final truth to be found - there is only provisional truth within a given context".(3)

In The Black Book, Durrell attempts a two-dimensional picture as he unfolds the narrative through both the narrator, Lawrence Lucifer, who is himself a character in the book, and through fragments from the diary of Herbert Gregory, another major character in the novel. Gregory, a forty-year-old Englishman inhabiting the Regina Hotel, a seedly hotel in London, gives one dimension of the picture as he describes the people who inhabit the hotel and who are the main characters of the book: Lobo, characterised by homesickness; Chamberlain, the "canary-haired zealot, living in one of the flats nearby with a young wife and three dogs",(4) and whose happiest moments are those when he is lecturing on sex; Tarquin and his vain attempts to win Clare's love and sympathy, which reminds us of Balthazar and the disastrous result when he falls in love with a Greek actor in the Quartet.

Lawrence Lucifer escapes to the Ionian to contemplate the kind of life he and his friends were leading in the Regina Hotel, itself a symbol of England and all it stands for, and describes the incidents from his own point of view. Lucifer's perspective, however subjective, is not totally different from Gregory's, as the revelatory extracts from his diary show. Lucifer sees himself and his friends as a will-less animal menagerie kept for scientific experiments:

> With me I carry this little toy ark, with its little toy animals, Lobo, Miss Venable, etc. We are lit up in signs of a new chaos. We are like patches of tissue, kept warm in sealed

> flasks, fed, washed, and commanded to multiply under the watchful supervision of a scientist. (5)

Lucifer recalls the time he spent in England, at the Regina Hotel, with the shadow of death hovering over the place, the memory of which carries a sense of death within itself. He remembers his friends, or rather his co-inhabitants, and being a writer he decides to write his first "real book" about his former experiences. Recalling his companions, they come back to life:

> ...Tarquin, walking along the iced suburban streets, his scarf drawn across his face, the disease growing in his womb; I mean Lobo, clambering his suburban girls like a powder monkey; I mean Perez, Chamberlain, Gregory, Grace, Peters, Hilda. (6)

As the narrative unfolds we do not discern great contradictions in Gregory's and Lucifer's views for they complement rather than contrast with or contradict each other. The two views are juxtaposed to emphasize the author's conception of England as a waste land, epitomized in the sterility of the actions and the circumstances of the diverse characters living in and near the Regina Hotel.

When Durrell came to write the Quartet he could develop his conception a little further, adding experience and depth to his already formulated perspective. "Adultery, prostitution, sodomy, lesbianism, sadism, murder, suicide, and all that sort of thing, are not absent from these pages",(7) Aldington remarks. To bring home his meaning, Durrell has attempted a multi-dimensional narrative, which helps to enhance, contradict, interpret or reinterpret former incidents, in order to avoid a single subjective view. In his book A Key to Modern British

Poetry, he calls attention to the fact that our critical faculties are greatly coloured by our own subjective views:

> Human beings suffer from binocular vision: if you look at the stars through a pair of binoculars you can only see a small part of the sky at once. The act of thinking about something creates a field around the object observed, and in order to think about that object you must neglect the whole from which the object has been separated. It is easy to see what a grave limitation this is, particularly for a critic. Everything is part of some greater whole. Everything is the sum of smaller parts. How, then, can we deal with the object-in-itself? (8)

Durrell states, in his prefatory Note to the original edition of Balthazar, that "three sides of space and one of time constitute the soup-mix recipe of continuum".(9) Thus Justine, Balthazar, and Mountolive "are to be deployed spatially",(10) whereas Clea "will represent time and be a true sequel".(11) In the one-volume edition of the Quartet Durrell substituted a shorter Preface to his four novels, stressing the structural pattern employed in them:

> This group of four novels is intended to be read as a single work under the collective title of The Alexandria Quartet; a suitable descriptive subtitle might be 'a word continuum'. In trying to work out my form I adopted, as a rough analogy, the relativity proposition. The first three were related in an intercalary fashion, being 'siblings' of each other and not 'sequels'; only the last novel was intended to be a true sequel and to unleash the time dimension. The whole was intended as a challenge to the serial form of the conventional novel: the time-saturated novel of the day. (12)

Durrell has expressed the idea that he would like to be considered as one of the first new Romantics, and he asserts in his Preface to the Quartet that his method is unclassical.

As some critics argue, Durrell's method of double or multiple viewpoint has been attempted before on a limited scale, but he provides a scientific and theoretical basis for his procedures by invoking Einstein and his Relativity proposition. James Hogg in his novel The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824) gives two versions of the same story. The first is "the Editor's Narrative", recounted in the third person; the second, written subjectively as a first-person narrative, is told by the sinner himself. In Hogg's novel the reader is more fully informed by the second view, which provides an interpretation of the bare outlines provided by the Editor, whereas in the Quartet he gets more confused by further revelation.

A more recent example of the method, from the post-Einstein rather than the pre-Einstein age, is William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1929), which is made up of four parts. The first part is seen through the eyes and memory of a congenital imbecile, a man of thirty-three whose development has has not advanced beyond a child of three. Benjamin or Benjy has no sense of time, so associative thoughts are entangled together without logical or temporal connection in this first part. In the second part, however, the narrative is related by another member of the Compson family, Quentin, describing his last day alive, the day on which he commits suicide at Harvard in 1910. It is only in the third and fourth parts that the narrative takes a clear and coherent shape; only in the light of these can the reader realize the full significance of the previous incoherent material. The Sound and the Fury is a kind of family saga narrated in a highly unconventional and

oblique way rather than a study in relativity. Faulkner employs shifting viewpoints, but the experiences described are not overlapping as they are in the Quartet. The Sound and the Fury moves towards increasing clarity. Durrell maintains a relativistic position throughout, so that many issues remain unresolved. Durrell is consciously attempting to provide a novel built on Einsteinian paradigms in a way that Faulkner is not.

In Clea Pursewarden, advising Darley on how to become a successful writer, tells him:

> No, but seriously, if you wished to be - I do not say original but merely contemporary - you might try a four-card trick in the form of a novel; passing a common axis through four stories, say, and dedicating each to one of the four winds of heaven. A continuum, forsooth, embodying not a temps retrouvé but a temps délivré. (13)

In the first three volumes of the Quartet, therefore, time is "stayed" as the action in the three novels takes place through roughly the same period of time. Only in the fourth volume, Clea, is a dimension of time added. In Justine, Darley is seen on a Greek island recreating the experiences of his life in the way they became significant to him. When other characters are revealed they are seen through Darley's eyes. Melissa is the compassionate Greek dancer who is Darley's mistress and seems to be really in love with him. Justine, wife to Nessim Hosnani, is Darley's other, more enigmatic mistress, with whom he seems to be infatuated because of the mystery surrounding her character. Because she is married, their relation has to be secretive. Both Darley and Justine suspect Nessim to be following them and planning to kill one

or both of them. In spite of his premonitions, Darley accepts an invitation to a duck shoot where both his fears and Justine's are heightened, when events terminate in the mysterious death of a man supposed to be Capodistria, Justine's seducer and a sexmaniac. A little earlier, we know of Melissa's death from tuberculosis. The narrative is fragmentary, fluctuating between past and present. Thus, the first three volumes are not concerned with chronological time, as the focus on specific incidents is shifted to and fro according to their significance to the narrator. Balthazar is a revaluation, through Balthazar's eyes, of the incidents narrated in Justine, with a few additions and different interpretation of the same events, though Darley is still the narrator. The third "sibling", Mountolive, is an apparently objective narrative in the third person, but the reader's expectations of reaching solid ground are floundered by yet another unreliable point of view. Clea, the fourth movement of the quartet, marks progression in time. Thus, according to Durrell, the whole corresponds to Einstein's theory of three dimensions of space and one of time, forming a single space-time continuum.

Though Darley is the narrator of the first, second and fourth volumes of the Quartet, there are other voices through which certain incidents are unfolded. Darley refers to Justine's diary given to him by her husband Nessim. Later incidents reveal that the diary is not Justine's, though it is written in her handwriting. It actually belongs to her former husband, Arnauti, who wrote it as part of his novel, Moeurs, but did not include it in the published version. Moeurs, Arnauti's novel about Justine (who is called Claudia in the narrative)

and her city of Alexandria, gives another perspective on the narrative. Darley tells of the way he came to know Justine, of her marriage to wealthy Nessim, and of her enigmatic personality. Arnauti's diary probes deeply into Justine's past, her low origins and her poverty:

> Walking through the Egyptian quarter the smell of flesh changes - ammoniac, sandalwood, saltpetre, spice, fish. She would not let me take her home - no doubt because she was ashamed of her house in these slums. (14)

Arnauti seems to take pains to understand her, hoping to find a pattern for her inconsistent behaviour; his achievement widens the dimension of Justine's character:

> Of her origins I learned little, save that she had been very poor. She gave me the impression of someone engaged in giving a series of savage caricatures of herself... The speed with which she moved from one milieu to another, from one man, place, date to another, was staggering. (15)

Arnauti reveals many facets of Justine's personality; her nymphomania, her psychological block and her hysteria, but he admits there are still darker sides which he could not reach:

> She had of course many secrets being a true child of the Mouseion, and I had to guard myself desperately against jealousy or the desire to intrude upon the hidden side of her life. (16)

The picture is enhanced by Darley who believes, or is made to believe, that she is in love with him, and that her marriage to Nessim was made as a matter of convenience from his own point of view, welcomed by Justine on the assumption that it would finance her search for her lost daughter. He believes that Justine "was merely working out with [me] the same obsessive pattern she had followed out in the pages of Arnauti".(17)

He sees their relation as enriching his life, as he nostalgically remembers in Justine: "how magically she seemed to live - a mistress so full of wit and incantation that one wondered how one had ever managed to love before and be content in the quality of the loving".(18)

Another dimension is added when Darley nourishes the idea that Nessim knows of their liaison and is planning a retaliation. Once, when Nessim was away in Cairo to make a radio broadcast, Darley and Justine were sitting in "the great bedroom of the house", listening to Nessim's quiet voice over the radio, when suddenly they overheard his footsteps on the iron staircase and saw the head and shoulders of a man of Nessim's stature. Both Darley and Justine were alarmed. Later, Darley finds the word "beware" written in the sand with a stick, and he suspects it is written by Selim to warn him. The idea is further developed when he discovers that the telescope at the "Summer Palace", which is supposed to be directed upwards to see the highest minarets, is directed downwards towards "the little reed hut where not an hour since Justine and I had been lying in each other's arms".(19) After the duck shoot, Justine disappears from the scene, and the narrator gives the impression that she has run away out of fear. Clea writes later to Darley, telling him that Justine has left for Palestine and has changed in appearance as well as in herself, now that she has achieved a new and perfect happiness through community service, reaching "a new humility". The change in Justine's personality is very sudden and out of character, but the way it is reported seems convincing, for Clea herself is struck by the change when they meet briefly in Palestine:

> Watching her now and remembering the touching and tormenting person she had once been for us all I found it hard to comprehend the change into this tubby little peasant with the hard paws. (20)

Justine's physical appearance has suddenly changed, and as Clea reports that '"her features seem to have broadened, become more classically Jewish, lip and nose inclining more towards each other"'.(21)

Justine ends with a letter from Clea putting the final touches to the former events. Yet, in Balthazar, the second volume of the Quartet, which covers almost the same time-span as the first volume, new light is shed on the same incidents of Justine. Though Darley is still the narrator, the point of view is that of Balthazar who writes his comments on the "Justine" manuscript. As Balthazar is supposed to be very knowledgeable due to his access to most of the characters, his information, called "the great interlinear" by Darley, adds a new dimension, equivalent to Einstein's second dimension of space. Slowly and reluctantly, Darley tells the reader, he had to go back "like a man who at the end of a tremendous journey is told that he has been sleepwalking".(22)

Attempting to preserve unity in this welter of people and subplots, Durrell resorts to his experimental "n. dimensional" technique. He cuts rapidly back and forth between characters and events, and blends past, present and future by his shuttle treatment. In the "Workpoints" at the end of Justine there is a quotation of Pursewarden's about the "n-dimensional novel" trilogy which sheds light on Durrell's technique:

> The narrative momentum forward is counter-sprung by references backwards in time, giving

> the impression of a book which is not travelling from a to b but standing above time and turning slowly on its own axis to comprehend the whole pattern. Things do not lead backwards to things which have passed. A marriage of past and present with the flying multiplicity of the future racing towards one. Anyway, that was my idea. (23)

The beginning of Justine, when Darley is on the island reviewing his former life in Alexandria, marks the end of the first three volumes, since the events that take place in each of them happen simultaneously. At the beginning of Balthazar, Darley is still on the island and all the events narrated in this second volume do not mark any progression in time. Mountolive goes further back in time than the first two, but still does not advance in time. In Clea, after an obvious lapse of time, Darley returns from the island to Alexandria with Melissa's child. Time has taken its toll and, as incidents unfold, a remarkable progression is observed as chronological time starts to be followed.

In Balthazar, the scene is again set in Alexandria, the stage being crowded with the same characters as in Justine, but they are now given different roles to play. New characters appear on the stage, such as David Mountolive, the British ambassador to Egypt, who becomes a major character; and Keats, a minor character who has a major effect in intensifying the theme of the growth of the artist, interwoven throughout the tetralogy. Keats "once... had wanted to be a writer but took the wrong turning".(24) His training as a journalist breeds in him the typical journalist's neurosis: "namely that something has happened, or is about to happen, in the next street"(25)

which keeps him restless. Keats is seen in Clea shedding the gear of journalism for the regalia of creative writers. He tells Darley: "I have begun it at last, that bloody joyful book of mine. Chapter by chapter it is forming in my old journalist's noodle - no, not a journalist's any more, a writer's".(26) Other characters given major parts to play include Nessim's younger brother, Narouz, who had hardly any significance in Justine, and Scobie, who is projected as a freak when his secret "tendencies" are disclosed.

Scobie is both in perfect harmony with the society in which he lives, and yet different. He is promoted as Bimbashi in the Egyptian Police, dons the tarbrush (the native head-dress at the time) which he calls the "Heirloom", and speaks the native tongue. He is very peculiar in the way he rolls his glass eye, talks to friends (his talks are usually interspersed by short dozes), and sometimes at the full moon falls under her influence, becoming affected by his "tendencies", as he puts it. The way he dies, dressed up as a tart, surprises Clea who thought Scobie "had fallen down those stairs at the Central Quism and killed himself",(27) as Balthazar had told her.

In Clea, there is a close-up depiction of Narouz who is manipulated as a narrative vehicle for describing the local festivals, which he rambles through. Narouz is not a villain in the usual sense, but is employed to perform that role when, instead of presenting him as a victim of a plot by the Memlik and Nessim to cover up the political conspiracy, Durrell introduces, prior to his death, a number of episodes where Narouz is exposed as cruel, merciless and inhuman in his treatment of his fellow villagers. His inhumanity to the villagers and

torture of animals are portrayed as sadistic inclinations in his personality; he derives great pleasure from such acts. Durrell's point is that Narouz is not really a victim, though his brother Nessim has different views, because he ought to pay for his cruelties and his sadistic inclination. To Nessim, Narouz is killed by the Memlik's orders as a scapegoat to keep the Hosnanis' name clean after their political plot has been discovered.

As to Justine herself, there is nothing definite about her, for as soon as a statement concerning her behaviour is uttered a contradictory one appears. As in Einstein's principle of relativity there is nothing absolute, so here Durrell suggests that the different faces of Justine's character could be coexisting. Justine's relation to Nessim and her agreement to marry him are given different explanations. For his own part, Nessim chose to marry a Jewess in order to be trusted by the Jews in Palestine. Again in Balthazar it is suggested that Justine has renounced Judaism to become a Copt in obedience to Nessim's wish. Once when Justine protests that she only admires him and is therefore reluctant to accept his proposal of marriage, Nessim assures her that she need not worry as "all Alexandrian marriages are business ventures after all".(28) She admires that part of his personality which involved his political life and leadership. The unravelling of the political conspiracy explains Nessim's actions when he used to spend much of his time practising with his gun, but it does not justify or explain in any way Justine's fears, which seemed to be genuine. Darley discovers that Justine's real love was for Pursewarden as they both corresponded through Balthazar, who passed on this piece

of information. Perhaps Darley himself can see now how she has been using him as a decoy, as Balthazar asserts in his "interlinear". "Must I now learn to see it all with new eyes", Darley exclaims, "to accustom myself to the truths which Balthazar has added?"(29) Pursewarden's suicide is given another interpretation: his realization that he has been mistaken about Nessim, and his conflict between his loyalty to his friend and his duty as an envoy of his country. The theme of detection dominating the latter half of Justine gives way to the political plot of Nessim and his associates against British interests in Egypt. The political plot reveals both Darley and Pursewarden as decoys of Nessim!

The third volume of the Quartet, Mountolive, depicts almost the same incidents, from a different perspective since Durrell uses the third person. As the title indicates, the narrative concentrates more on Mountolive's childhood, taking us back in time to that of the previous two volumes to reveal Mountolive's childhood ( ) and his close attachment to his mother, which explains in part his admiration and love for Leila as a substitute. His relation with the Hosnanis - Nessim, Narouz and their mother Leila - is explored more fully; another clue is revealed to account for Pursewarden's suicide.

Mountolive's father had defected to India after the child's eleventh birthday, "a friendly withdrawal into the world of Eastern scholarship on which his heart had set for many years".(30) Mountolive and his mother had settled in England on the understanding that the father would join them on retirement. The child was then brought up by his mother with a close bond grow-

ing between them.

After various diplomatic postings to non-Arabic-speaking countries, Mountolive is finally posted as British Ambassador to Egypt. While still in England, he receives a long letter from Pursewarden telling him, among other things, that Maskelyne's suspicion of the Hosnanis holds no water: "The so-called secret society...was a student lodge of the Cabala devoted to the customary mumbo-jumbo of parlour mysticism".(31) As soon as he takes up his office, however, Mountolive gets Maskelyne transferred and Pursewarden promoted as his chief political adviser, the first fatal mistake he makes, as later incidents reveal. Pursewarden meets Melissa from whom he learns that Maskelyne's suspicions of Nessim were right, that Nessim is conspiring against British interests in Egypt. This is given as the reason for his suicide. His conflict is unveiled when he leaves messages for both parties: he sends a letter of explanation to Mountolive, and he writes on his mirror with his shaving brush: "NESSIM. COHEN PALESTINE ETC. ALL DISCOVERED AND REPORTED".(32) Before his death, Pursewarden rings up Nessim to tell him of the message on the mirror; he also writes to Mountolive to apologise and inform him of his great mistake concerning the Hosnanis:

> Quite by accident, in an unexpected quarter,
> I stumbled upon something which told me that
> Maskelyne's theories about Nessim were right,
> mine wrong. (33)

We learn also in Mountolive that Justine's departure for Palestine was a preconceived plan by Nessim to avoid the repercussions of the political plot. As Justine expresses her anxiety over Nessim's health and agitated condition, he disclosed his

plans:

> By the autumn, when eveything is ready,
> we shall have to take up new dispositions.
> It may mean a separation of perhaps a year,
> Justine. I want you to go there and stay
> there while it all happens (34)

In the first book of the Quartet there is a detailed description of Nessim's half-madness. He is portrayed as a person who tries hard to control his inner neurosis:

> He would sit down, panting slightly and
> feeling the sweat beginning to start out
> on his forehead; but with relief that
> nothing of his interior struggle was visible
> to the casual onlooker... 'Good' she heard
> him tell one of his mirrors, 'so you are
> falling into a neurasthenia!' (35)

It is only in the third book that we are given an explanation for Nessim's eccentric behaviour:

> It was almost dawn when Nessim came bare-
> foot into her room. She woke to feel his
> arms about her shoulders; he was kneeling
> by the bed, shaken by a paroxysm which at
> first she took to be a fit of weeping...
> 'I simply must tell you why I have been
> acting so strangely. I cannot bear the
> strain any longer... I am faced with the
> terrible possibility of having to do away
> with Narouz. That is why I have been
> feeling half-mad. (36)

Likewise the feigned death of Capodistria has been contrived by Nessim and Da Capo himself as the latter was in great debt which he wanted to avoid. It was arranged that Nessim would claim Capodistria's insurance after announcing his death.

In Mountolive, the reader expects an objective and final view of the incidents recounted in the first two volumes. Durrell, however, seems to adhere to Einstein's principle of [illegible] by giving no final decisions or clues. Friedman believes that the third novel of the Quartet is less informative.

He indicates that

> it is not despite but because Mountolive tells us the most, offers the most in the way of objective, external truth, that it has least to say about truth itself, about the essence of reality that is captured, if anywhere, in the heart and mind of the interpreter. (37)

The fourth volume, Clea, adds the time dimension of the space-time continuum, as it presents a remarkable advance in time. Darley resumes as narrator, but the reader gets most of the information through other characters, such as Mnemjian. Though the narrator is still the same, there is a remarkable change in his perspective, as he seems to be a more experienced and mature observer than the Darley of the earlier narrative. Mnemjian sets the scene of post-war Alexandria in a nutshell by talking briefly about Darley's friends in Alexandria. He shows Darley a recent photo of Capodistria who is still alive, a fact which reveals that reality wears different faces; he also chats about the changes that have befallen the Hosnanis. When Darley arrives at the Egyptian seaport, we see the changes through his eyes, affirming Mnemjian's information, but we also see how Darley himself has changed and has acquired a new outlook towards familiar things. Has Justine really changed so much that her appearance is repulsive to Darley; or is he seeing her with different and critical eyes? Has Justine been vulgarly repulsive from the very beginning, but could Darley's inexperienced and romantic eyes not see that at the time? Darley, however, seems to have changed a great deal himself. In Balthazar Darley painstakingly searches for Justine's perfume in the Atarin quarter; whereas in Clea he cannot stand the same perfume! Contrary to the early word-picture of Justine, Darley

here projects a caricature of a nauseating, over-perfumed old hag, exaggerating her points faibles. A similar situation is depicted in Mountolive however. Leila is rejected by Mountolive because of "her strange confusion of scents... she smelt like some old Arab lady!"(38) which surely in Durrell's vocabulary means a horrible smell. Mountolive believes Leila has been drinking as he catches "the dull taint of whisky", just as Justine seemed to have been drinking:

> Something in the enforced stillness of her attitude suggested an inner unsteadiness and the idea crossed my mind that perhaps she had been drinking. (39)

Leila came to meet Mountolive unveiled after a long time of staying as a recluse in her village, and Mountolive, seeing her wrinkled face, shudders with full apprehension:

> He suddenly thought, bringing himself up with a start, 'My God! I simply haven't stopped to think how old Leila might be! (40)

Lying with Justine in his arms, Darley ceases to find her fascinating:

> She had become a woman at last, lying there soiled and tattered, like a dead bird in a gutter, her hands crumpled into claws. (41)

It is Justine, however, who confirms Balthazar's conception that her love was for Pursewarden. She tells Darley: "'Strange to think that every word I then addressed to you was spoken mentally to him, to Pursewarden!'"(42) Nevertheless, Durrell never attempts something as simple as that, as his pack of Tarot cards is inexhaustible; Justine explains that Pursewarden himself was a substitute for Nessim whom she really adored: "'And yet again, in another dimension, everything I felt and did then was really for Nessim!'"(43) The later picture

of Justine is intended to be hazy and vague in order to obliterate her from the scene and project Clea, Darley's friend and prospective lover, in her place. Durrell's attempt has been rejected by some critics, however. George Steiner believes that Clea "marks a drastic falling off", and it "represents a distinct failure of nerve".(44) He sees the fourth novel as "a brittle, self-conscious gloss on the three preceding volumes".

At the time Durrell came to write Clea he did not seem willing to try more experimentation. He himself has noted that he was afraid it would all come to pieces if he did. Nevertheless, he attempted to maintain two major things: to continue the main theme in the same manner as he did in the first two volumes, giving multi-dimensional aspects to his characters; and to bring about the conclusion in a dramatic, symbolic way. Thus the reader's expectations for more explanations or clues to untangle the situations are ungratified, and many critics, such as Steiner, have considered Clea "a brittle, self-conscious gloss" on the first three volumes. Relevant as it is to the Quartet, the symbols used (Clea's wound through which she emerges a good painter, and Darley's growth into a real artist symbolized in the first words of a story: "once upon a time...") do not shed light on the many dark points and Clea leaves the reader with many unresolved questions. Steiner indicates that in Clea

> Nothing is ever wholly explained; neither the murder of Narouz...nor the true nature of the conspiratorial web which surrounds Nessim and Mountolive, keeping them entangled yet divided. (45)

In Clea, Liza gives another - presumably, but not definitely, final - interpretation of Pursewarden's suicide: she and her

brother have been lovers. When she and Mountolive fall in love and decide to get married, Pursewarden chooses to sacrifice his life for his sister's happiness. His death, he believes, would free her from any moral obligation, from any sense of guilt for forsaking her brother and marrying Mountolive. Liza gives Pursewarden's notebooks to Clea, who in turn hands them to Darley. Another side of Pursewarden's artistic stature is revealed as his comments on Darley include useful pieces of advice for the artist, which seem to represent Durrell's theories on the same subject. Pursewarden's notes give another version of how Justine's lost child was found dead in a brothel and how Justine reacted towards this incident. In the earlier episode, narrated from Darley's point of view, Darley accompanies Nessim to a brothel to find Justine there.

At Moulid El Scob, Darley meets Balthazar who informs him of Justine's intention to meet Memlik Pasha to persuade him to restore the Hosnanis. Clea's letter, at the end of the fourth book, adds that Justine has succeeded with the Memlik and that the Hosnani place and rank is on the way to restoration. In the "Workpoints" at the end of Clea Durrell suggests further possibilities when he refers to "Memlik and Justine in Geneva".

By the end of the Quartet characters reach a multi-dimensional stature, for the reader never, for instance, forgets the early picture of Justine, nor her later picture while staying in degenerating conditions under house-arrest, nor yet the hopeful denouement of the reconciliation of Justine and Nessim with the Memlik Pasha, recalling Justine's final image "radiantly and beautifully turned out in a spring frock of eloquent design".

Durrell asserts the fallibility of our vision as he, time and again, uses symbolism to drive home his meaning. Mirrors are frequently used as symbols: a mirror does not reflect the whole picture of reality and therefore a reflection on a mirror is modified by the onlooker, as Durrell quotes from de Sade:

> The mirror sees the man as beautiful, the mirror loves the man; another mirror sees the man as frightful and hates him; and it is always the same being who produces the impressions. (46)

Relativity is emphasized, implying that absolute reality is difficult to attain. In "Delphi", an article republished in Spirit of Place, Durrell exclaims: "Is not Truth two-sided?"

Carl Dawson believes that "the applied relativity distorts and reduces Durrell's novels".(47) He considers that "time", as used in the Quartet, is not different from that used by Joyce or Proust, and that Durrell's understanding of relativity seems "much more limited than the 'Note' or the 'Preface' suggests".(48) For him the Quartet "expresses an almost anachronistically traditional sense of art and life".(49)

Durrell's method was not original since there are earlier examples of the multiple view points, occurring in the same time sequence. Ford Madox Ford attempted the multiple vision in his novel The Good Soldier. The novel tells the story of two married couples, one English and one American, and is narrated by the American husband, Dowell. On the face of it the story is a simple one of corruption and lust, but further unfolding reveals the ambiguity of the characters, whose motivations are complex, not least of them is the narrator himself who

seemed to be trusted at the beginning. Another and earlier attempt was made by Robert Browning in one of his narrative poems, The Ring and the Book (1868-9). After the preface which expounds the story, the poem recounts first the opinion on the case of "Half-Rome", and then with the opinion of "The Other Half-Rome", and then of "Tertium Quid", who takes an impartial attitude. Count Guido next tells his story, which is followed by that of Caponsacchi; then came the pleadings of the advocates. These are followed by the Pope's reflections and Guido's scornful and ferocious defiance, collapsing into abject cowardice when he finally knows his fate. Durrell's Einsteinian method is used to give a sense of modernity and contemporaneity to his novels.

Durrell's sequence of time is "cyclic rather than extended"; he follows the same sequence of time as that of The Waste Land. In the Key, he explains:

> I am not suggesting that modern poetry is constructed to illustrate the quantum theory, but I do suggest that it unconsciously produces something like the time-space continuum in the way that it uses words and phrases: and the way in which its forms are cyclic rather than extended. Time, both in the novel and in the poem, has taken on a different aspect. (50)

The Waste Land first appeared in The Criterion (1922). In the Notes on the poem, Eliot acknowledges his indebtedness to Miss J.L. Weston's book, From Ritual to Romance, for suggesting the title, the plan, and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem. He also refers to another important book, The Golden Bough by J.G. Frazer; he was indebted to this for his use of the legend of the death and resurrection of Osiris, Attis and Adonis, gods and symbols of the natural

cycles of fertility ritual of growth and decay.

Durrell believes that The Waste Land "embalms the life of the twentieth century in a series of images, some disgusting, some beautiful, some vague, some sharp as crystal".(51) In fact, Eliot's poem had a tremendous influence on Durrell's writings, and both The Black Book and The Alexandria Quartet display the extent of Eliot's influence on him. In March, 1937, Henry Miller, commenting on The Black Book, wrote to Durrell:

> The theme is death and rebirth, the Dionysian theme which I predicted in the Lawrence book must be the theme for the writers to come - the only theme permissible or possible. Your rebirth is the most violent act of destruction. (52)

In a letter dated May 20, 1946, Durrell wrote to Miller, from Rhodes, telling him:

> I have done a little bit of the Book of the Dead, from the beginning this time. I am using Alexandria as a locale, and it comes out bold and strong in bright colours. (53)

Here, of course, Durrell is referring to The Alexandria Quartet. Commenting on The Waste Land in his Key Durrell's words can even describe The Black Book or the Quartet, bearing in mind its early title as "The Book of the Dead". Durrell wrote:

> The modern city-man, heir to all the ages, possessor of as great a science and of an accumulated knowledge greater than anything the world has seen, is in an impasse. How can he organize all this material in such a way as to give his life meaning? The problem was urgent in [illegible] decade [illegible]. Today it is the only really serious problem facing us. (54)

Durrell's remarks appear in his treatment of The Waste Land which was considered in the 1920's and the 1930's as representative of the age, an epitome of the sterility and confusion of

the contemporary world. Eliot himself asserts that:

> Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more complex, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning. (55)

That is exactly what Eliot did when he wrote The Waste Land. The rich disorganization of the poem, the heavy complex allusions to classical works, convey the modern state of civilization and the muddle caused by the rich inheritance of literary works, resulting in a modern waste land. In Balthazar, the narrator, Darley, faces a similar situation because of the rich material he has accumulated which confuses him. He exclaims:

> How then am I to manipulate this mass of crystallized data in order to work out the meaning of it and so give a coherent picture of this impossible city of love and obscenity? (56)

This kind of impasse faces Lawrence Lucifer, the narrator in The Black Book, who recalls the agonizing experience he and his friends had passed through when he was in England. It was only by escaping to a Greek island that he could heave a deep sigh of relief and is able to recall the incidents which happened at the Regina Hotel, itself a symbol of sterility, pettiness and death. Lucifer emphasizes his point of view by quoting from the diary of one of the residents, Herbert Gregory. In Gregory's diary there is the same agony the same sense of futility, boredom and nothingness. In his despair Gregory calls himself "Death Gregory". The epigraph quoted by Eliot in The Waste Land speaks likewise of death:

> Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent : Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις;
> respondebat illa : ἀποθανεῖν θέλω. (57)

Lucifer could not write in summer as it is not the season for agony and death, for "the sun dries up what is fluid of agony in us, laps us in a carapace of heat, so that all we know is nothing, sunblack, Egyptian nothing".(58) The narrator recognizes that he and his friends share a correspondence of death with the season as he feels that in winter "no mummies, chunks of tissue latched to bone; no pillars of salt, no cadavers, have ever been half so dead as we are today".(59) The memory of the Regina Hotel revives death as he lists the names of those who shared his experience: Tarquin "pinned to a slab of rufous cork, etherized, like a diseased butterfly".(60) This echoes the first lines of Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Pruflock":

> Let us go then, you and I,
> When the evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherised upon a table. (61)

Durrell's image of a pinned butterfly echoes another line from the same poem by Eliot: "When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall..." (62)

Gregory remembers other companions: "in his little cubicle Lobo lies in bed, curled up like a foetus",(63) or, "in his little underground Hades overlooking the garden Peters will be lying, pondering on his own genius - or masturbating".(64) One thing they have in common is the sense of sterility expressed in The Waste Land. The long catalogue of morbid love pictures betrays a keen interest in displaying abnormal and futile love relations. The only normal love relation is Chamberlain's who is married and lives in the vicinity of the Hotel. Later incidents, however, reveal Chamberlain's wife seeking solace outside her marriage. Though Chamberlain's lectures and most

interesting talk are about sex, there is a tremendous sense of vacuum in their lives, a spiritual vacuum. Consequently, when Lucifer calls at their house when her husband is out, she encourages him to stay on and feels frantic when he thinks of leaving her. Lucifer, feeling embarrassed because he can sense Chamberlain's presence everywhere in the house, impregnating the place, but at the same time willing to comfort her, suggests taking her out for dinner. She recalls the "Lady of Situation" in "A Game of Chess" from The Waste Land. Later in the evening, after her agitated nerves are calmed down, she explains to Lucifer, that her main object was not a sexual relationship:

> You know I really didn't want to. That's why I hated you.... I've been feeling sort of dead these days, from the hips upward. Now I'm happy again. (65)

An echo of The Waste Land is conveyed a little earlier in the narrative when Lucifer and Chamberlain's wife are in the room together, each thinking of a means of solace:

> Presently she switches off the light and turns on the wireless. The room is ringing with a symphony. (66)

This incident, with the music playing, recalls the episode in part III of The Waste Land, "The Fire Sermon", about the clerk and the typist and their futile love they experience. After the lover departs, the typist "smooths her hair with automatic hand,/And puts a record on the gramophone".(67) The music in both cases suggests an attempt to drown any sense of guilt caused by thinking. Durrell's incident combines the atmosphere conveyed in the episode of the typist and the clerk when sex is both taken and given mechanically without aversion, leaving a sense of unfulfilment and sterility, and the sense of boredom

portrayed in "A Game of Chess", when the air of conspicuous wealth does not make up for the spiritual vacuum:

> My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
> Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
> What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
> I never know what you are thinking. Think. (68)

To enhance the sense of emptiness in the lives of the people living in the Regina Hotel, Lucifer exposes them one by one, painting a gloomy, decadent environment. He repeatedly makes use of Gregory's diary to imply the reliability of his focus. Here is a fragment relating to the atmosphere of boredom and ennui in Eliot's poem:

> ("What can I do? What can I do?
> There is no action in me... It is not
> virtue going out from me, but a dead
> loss to the body, the psyche, the will.
> My vitality runs out of me like pus,
> and there is no figure of grief strong
> enough to express it. Shall I pour
> my hair through my fingers? Shall I
> tie the grin of the madman round my
> face like a scarf?") (69)

There is an echo of a line in Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", "Shall I part my hair behind",(70) which in its context expresses a sense of exasperation and worry about old age.

Gregory's love to Gracie is doomed; she has the fatal disease of tuberculosis and eventually dies. The gap between Lucifer and Hilda is large, and similarly implies sterility:

> Between the artist I, and Hilda the prostitute,
> there is an immediate correspondence. We rec-
> ognize and respect each other, as pariahs do;
> we love each other, but we do not understand
> each other. (71)

Hilda, the eternal mother-womb symbol, has lost her ovaries:

> Hilda is lying in Bethlehem, dead drunk.
> This winter is eventful for her, veteran
> sportsman that she is. She has lost both
> ovaries. (72)

Yet Hilda's sterility is merely a stage in her life likened to the vegetation cycle in which phases of aridity are followed by others of fertility. Lucifer calls her "the genesis from which I shall be born again on the third day".(73)

Durrell's attempts to use symbolism in The Black Book are not always successful. The suggestion that there is a cyclical change implied there is faint and unsustained throughout the book. Eliot's influence is, however, apparent and predominant in The Black Book. In the Key, Durrell discusses spiritual death in The Waste Land, but he also refers to a future elation embodied in the vegetation and fertility rites where death is only a stage in a rotary cycle. The Waste Land, he points out, "draws a faithful picture of the human condition, but it also suggests that there are ways out of our present dilemma".(74) In The Black Book he models his imagery and symbolism on Eliot's poem, recreating and illustrating in more detailed, though still fragmentary, fashion the agony of spiritual death, the sterility of life and the futility of love. In spite of the gloomy atmosphere depicted in The Black Book, there is a beam of hope left at the end. It is as if in the middle of a sea storm one realizes there is an island on the horizon. Nothing is definite, there is no assertion of being rescued, and the future is still bleak, but there is a faint beam of hope. Durrell, however, is ambivalent in expressing his views - more so in this work than usual. It is not clear whether he wants to imply that spiritual death is the end of

the world, or that there is really a gleam of hope in his outlook. Fraser states that "The Black Book, in fact, is messy, as so many powerful books by very young men are".(75) At one moment Durrell dismisses the whole book as "epileptic, a fit",(76) and confesses to Henry Miller: "I'm afraid it's overpacked with lard".(77) At another, however, he acknowledges his own voice in the work; and when Miller praises The Black Book, calling Durrell a genius, Durrell writes to him:

> You see, I CAN'T WRITE REAL BOOKS ALL THE TIME. It's like an electric current: increase the dose very gradually. Already the B.B. has played havoc with me. What I want is this, frankly. Once every three years or more I shall try to compose for full orchestra. The rest of the time I shall do essays, travel-books, perhaps one more novel under Charles Norden. (78)

In The Black Book Greece stands for light, hope and life; whereas England stands for darkness, despair and death. Lucifer's escape to the Ionian conveys a sense of hope, of overcoming despair and death dictated by the environment. Nevertheless, at the end of the book, while Lucifer is still on the Greek island, away from England, the closing note is one of despair, of inevitable death and agony. G.S. Fraser sums up Durrell's attitude beautifully when he remarks that Durrell has a deep sense of "a certain basic horror in life", yet he adds: "But for all his sense of that horror, a certain temperamental robustness and hopefulness combined, strangely, with a mild cosmic mysticism tends to get the upper hand."(79)

The Black Book displays similar symbols to those used in The Waste Land. In Miss Weston's scheme, from which Eliot

derived some of his symbolism, the experience of sex, as in the case of Phlebas, assumes a universal or religious significance; it is connected with the state of the land. The fertility cycle is based on sex and personified in ritualistic figures. Eliot borrowed the Grail story which contains a number of myths, the main one centring on the Fisher King and explicable in terms of vegetation or fertility rites. The sexual maiming and restoration of the Fisher King is reflected in his land, and when he is maimed the land becomes a waste. In this connection Miss Weston called attention to the use of the Tarot pack, including the contrast between its present disrepute and its past authority. In Eliot's poem the Fisher King is the prototype of the male characters who melt into one another, and his is the subsuming myth.

The waste land owes its sterility to the Fisher King, who resembles the vegetation god. Eliot introduces the Hanged god into the Tarot pack to keep their roles separate and to convey a sense of hope; the Hanged god represents the final cause of the waste land and its possible resoration. In legend he was sacrificed in order that nature might be renewed. The condition of the land revealed in "The Burial of the Dead" is a product of his death. Any change in that state is contingent upon his revival, but also upon the attitude of the people. The Fisher King's role is to represent man's fate as it originates in sex but cannot transcend it; without this transcendence, which is figured in the Hanged god, he is doomed to death. This kind of transcendence does not take place in The Black Book, but gradually takes shape in the Quartet.

The characters in the Quartet are afflicted by an overpowering and most pernicious disease, due to the effect of landscape, the fatal disease of sex. The Alexandrian landscape dictates the behaviour of the characters and, in order to affect them deeply, wounds them sexually. Consequently, the total impact of the diverse sex-relations in the Quartet is that sex itself brings about destruction, sterility and nothingness. But it also implies that through sex they can be resurrected by spiritual love. Whether Durrell really meant his Quartet to carry such a significance or not, it does. After the melodramatic scene in which Clea's right hand is mutilated, she discovers, later, that she can paint much better with the artificial hand; this is clearly symbolic, indicating new possibilities and new life.

Justine reveals Darley deeply in love with both Justine and Melissa; for as he does not distinguish, at that time, between sex and love, Darley believes he is in love. This wavering between his two mistresses, Justine and Melissa, discloses his immaturity and inexperience in the world. Remembering his former days in Alexandria, Darley remarks while he is on a Greek island:

> I see at last that none of us is properly
> to be judged for what happened in the past.
> It is the city which should be judged
> though we, its children, must pay the price. (80)

Only from a distance, on a Greek island, does he perceive the great influence of the city on other characters; he remembers "the black ruin" which haunted the old poet of the city:

> I had come here in order completely to
> rebuild this city in my brain - melancholy
> provinces which the old man saw as full of
> the "black ruin" of his life. (81)

Darley has also experienced "the black ruin" in his life because of his failure in love. His love relations are futile: one with a cabaret dancer who has tuberculosis; the other with the wife of a friend. Justine herself knows that her relation with Darley is fateful and would attribute it to the influence of the city:

> Justine would say that we had been trapped in the projection of a will too powerful and too deliberate to be human - the gravitational field which Alexandria threw down about those it had chosen as its exemplars. (82)

Clea is the soft tune which gathers strength at the end, giving more significance to the former episodes. Darley realizes she has always been his image of the ideal love. Melissa is dead by now, his relation to Justine has to be destroyed, and Clea emerges gradually, but surely, confronting a bright future ahead of her. The sense of hope suggested here is more than that alluded to in The Waste Land. In "What the Thunder Said", the breaking of sterility is alluded to by:

> I sat upon the shore
> Fishing, with the arid plain behind me. (83)

This is preceded by the sound of rain. In the Quartet, Darley leaves behind him Alexandria and its destructive influence, and Clea's letter suggests a future meeting in Paris. Clea writes to Darley:

> On the table beside me as I write lies my steamship ticket to France; yesterday I knew with absolute certainty that I must go there. (84)

She ends her letter to Darley thus: "Write and tell me - or save it for some small café under a chestnut-tree, in smoky autumn weather, by the Seine".(85)

Like the Fisher King, Darley can finally overcome the kind of sterility which was threatening his life, and the Quartet can be considered Darley's growth out of the physical sterile world into the world of artistic creation (for both Darley and Clea), for he has shed the clothes of immaturity and inexperience and has started writing as a real artist. Clea tells him in a letter:

> As for you, wise one, I have a feeling that you too perhaps have stepped across the threshold into the kingdom of your imagination, to take possession of it once and for all. (86)

Darley's last words portend a change in him, a spiritual change, a realization of his potentialities, leaving behind him the arid phase of his life. These are hopeful words:

> Yes, one day I found myself writing down with trembling fingers the four words (four letters! four faces!) with which every story-teller since the world began has staked his slender claim to the attention of his fellow-men. Words which presage simply the old story of an artist coming of age. I wrote: 'Once upon a time....' (87)

Robert Scholes suggests that the closing lines of the Quartet denote a cyclic movement, historically speaking; he says:

> In Durrell "Once upon a time" are not the first words of his story but the last words, which suggests that we may have come to the end of a literary cycle, or rather the beginning of a new loop in the spiral of literary history. (88)

The ending is a reminder of part V of The Waste Land, "What the Thunder Said", in bringing about a final change, a sense of hope implied by the coming of rain which gives a message: Datta, Dayadhavam, Damyata; give, sympathize, control. Both Clea and Darley realize now the true meaning of love which they have been trying to find. The cycle has been completed, though

it will go on moving with a new understanding.

A further connection between the Quartet and The Waste Land is the mythological character, Tiresias. Durrell endows one of his characters, Scobie, with mythological qualities, stressing his importance: "No mythology of the city would be complete without its Scobie".(89) But there is one line in particular in The Waste Land, "I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs",(90) which refers to Tiresias' mythological history and which has influenced Durrell in conceiving his Scobie. He had in mind Tiresias "wrinkled dugs" when he referred to Scobie's bosom:

> You shove your hand inside his cheap
> night-jacket to experience those sad,
> blunt, far away little bumps of life -
> like a foetal heart in the seventh month. (91)

While exposing Scobie's secret "tendencies", his slipping into female duds at the full moon, Old Tiresias is recalled to mind:

> Old Tiresias
> No-one half so breezy as,
> Half so free and easy as
> Old Tiresias. (92)

Eliot's Tiresias throbs between two lives, one is dead and the other has a history behind it. Tiresias is first mentioned in the Odyssey as a Theban seer of compelling power who is already dead and in the Underworld. According to another version followed by Ovid, Tiresias once saw two snakes mating, struck them with his staff and was changed into a woman. Seven years later he saw them and hit them again, and reverted to man's shape. After his sex changes he was called to settle a dispute between Zeus and Hera on whether men or women get more pleasure from sex, he having experienced both. He declared for women.

Hera was insulted and blinded him; Zeus gave him long life and the gift of prophecy in compensation.

Durrell's Scobie is a caricature portrayal of Tiresias. He is a comic figure who has none of the wisdom of the historical figure, though there is a reference to his living as a hermit:

> He lives in his little sloping attic
> like an anchorite. (93)

This is further negated by a reference to his secret indulgences:

> He will pop his cheek vulgarly with his
> finger as he utters it, allowing his rolling
> eye to insinuate all the feminite indulgences
> he permits himself in secret. (94)

In history Tiresias lived to a great age, said to span seven generations. There is reference to that in the Quartet:

> Frankly Scobie looks anybody's age;
> older than the birth of tragedy,
> younger than the Athenian death. (95)

The exaggerated reference to his apparent longevity transforms him into a mythical figure, having affinities with both Eliot's Tiresias and the mythological figure from Ancient Greece. Here is another reference:

> in nineteen-ten a fall from the mizzen
> threw his jaw two points west by south-west,
> and smashed the frontal sinus... In ninety-
> eight he made eyes at another man's wife....
> and lost one of them. (96)

This passage refers also to Tiresias' blindness. Scobie has lost one eye, so he is half-blind. The causes of Tiresias' blindness and Scobie's loss of an eye are similar. According to one version, Tiresias was blinded by Hera, but according to another version his blindness was effected as punishment for watching Athena bathing in the fountain of Hippocrene, who was

responsible for blinding him. Eliot uses his blindness, however, to emphasize his spiritual significance: "What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem".(97)

In her article "Lawrence Durrell and the New Romanticism", Miss Mackworth draws attention to Scobie's importance:

> Scobie, in fact, seems to be a manifestation of Tiresias, and Tiresias is a manifestation of Man's "possibilities" and the intercalated realities of which he is composed...Scobie-Tiresias is simply acting out the hidden drama of which most people are unaware but which is necessary in the cosmic sense. The old reprobate, stirring his poisonous artificial whiskey in his bath tub, is a blink-up with the essential myths, which seem to have known all that Freud and Einstein have revealed to us with such éclat. Perhaps this great forward leap which mankind has taken during the last half-century has merely landed it back in the lap of its beginnings? (98)

Just as in The Waste Land "the one-eyed merchant seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples",(99) the characters of the Quartet are called up to replace one another. At the beginning of Justine, characters come into Darley's memory as a pack of Tarot cards. Darley remembers Justine who soon melts away to be replaced by Melissa: "At the time when I met Justine I was almost a happy man. A door had suddenly opened upon an intimacy with Melissa".(100) Melissa's picture then fades away to be replaced by Justine who invokes another character: Sophia of Valentinus. As Justine speaks, Darley thinks of "the burning stupid metaphor of Berenice's hair glittering in the night sky above Melissa's sleeping face".(101) Eliot explains that all the women in The Waste Land are one woman and Justine seemed to her former husband "not really a woman but the incarnation of Woman".(102)

Darley remembers that while Narouz was meeting the prostitute he was "drinking Clea thirstily out of this old body hired for pleasure, just as I myself wished only to drink Justine. Once again the austere, mindless primeval face of Aphrodite".(103) Melissa's lover, Cohen, remembering Melissa on his death-bed, sings a popular song, Jamais de la vie, to which Melissa was still dancing at the cabaret. The music has a magic effect in raising up characters:

> 'Listen to the music!' he said, and I thought suddenly of the dying Antony in the poem of Cavafy...Then once more I heard this gnome singing softly of chagrin and bonheur and he was singing not to Melissa but to Rebecca. (104)

The idea of characters as a pack of cards strikes Darley's mind as he writes to Clea from a Greek island, recalling his friends:

> Here for a night and a day I lived the life of an echo, thinking much about the past and about us all moving in it, the 'selective fictions' which life shuffles out like a pack of cards, mixing and dividing, withdrawing and restoring. (105)

In a Note at the end of Tunc, Durrell declares an intentional echo in this novel of The Alexandria Quartet and of The Black Book. G.S. Fraser quotes a passage from Petronius's Satyricon, which Durrell told him was the germ of Tunc:

> Nobody believes in heaven, see, nobody fasts, nobody gives a damn for the Almighty. No, people only bow their heads low to count their money. In the old days high-class ladies used to climb up the hill barefoot, their hair loose and their hearts pure, and ask God for rain. And he'd send it down in bucketsful right away - it was then or never - and everyone went home like drowned rats. Since we've given up religion the gods nowadays keep their feet well wrapped up. (106)

As Fraser has pointed out, this passage as well as the introduction to Spengler's The Decline of the West, to which Durrell has attributed the theme of Tunc, portend the degeneration of culture and religion. Echoes of this theme are heard in Tunc, The Black Book, the Quartet as well as in The Waste Land. One critic, however, has pointed out the close correspondence between all the characters in The Revolt of Aphrodite and the Tarot pack. Fraser refers to the affinity between Durrell's "double-decker" and the theme of The Waste Land:

> Where Tunc, like Candide, is about sterility, Nunquam, with the reversed role of Benedicta (now blessed and not accursed, now a symbol of fertility not sterility) and with the death of Julian and Felix's deliberate destruction of the records by which the Firm holds power over its slaves, suggests at least the possibility of hope. (107)

Eliot's influence has been, therefore, very strong on Durrell. Eliot was an influential and pioneer poet, a seminal critic, and a spiritual influence on his contemporaries. Influenced by Baudelaire and Laforgue, the symbolist and the ironic decadent, Eliot brought their influences into English and American poetry for the first time. Durrell was fascinated by Eliot's use of symbolism, by his choice of themes and by his modernist fragmentary technique. All these are manifested in the works of Durrell.

Freud's influence on Durrell is as great as Eliot's. Durrell told Suzanne Henig, in an interview, that he is a

"Freudian at heart":

> My use of sadistic violence is a deliberate use of the castration complex - so much more shocking than the old conventional Oedipus Complex. I am a Freudian at heart. (108)

His interest in Freud is expressed quite explicitly in his book of criticism:

> The name Freud means "Joy", and in time he will be recognized in the world as a real joybringer. His ideas have allowed us access to a new territory inside ourselves in which each one of us who is seeking to grow, to identify himself more fully with life, will feel like Columbus discovering America. (109)

The fact is, at the beginning of the twentieth century when Freudian ideas were newly minted, a great many writers attempted penetrating the "new territory" of the inner self; to do this, they developed the technique of the stream of consciousness in the novel. As examples of the influence of Freud, the names of Lawrence and Joyce come to mind. A recent interpretation of Finnegans Wake reveals Joyce's indebtedness to Freud's lecture on The Interpretation of Dreams. When earlier efforts to decipher Joyce's most obscure masterpiece failed, critics attempted another unconventional way by applying Freud's analyses of dreams and found that the various allusions and motifs in the book give way in the end.

Margot Norris disagrees with those serious critics - Edmund Wilson in his 1931 essay in Axel's Castle and Clive Hart in his critical work Structure and Motif in "Finnegans Wake", are given as examples - "who have judged the linguistic complexity of the work as superfluous - ornamental, perhaps, but nonfunctional".(110) They have also formed a few misconceptions about the nature and function of the dream in Finnegans Wake,

according to Norris. She affirms that

> Finnegans Wake is not merely the "illusion" of a dream, or the "surface" of a dream, as it were. The work, in fact, explores the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, and the strange, cunning, antagonistic communication that is effected between them in dreams. (111)

Norris believes that the critical assessment of the language in this novel depends on the understanding of the status and function of words in the dream. In such a case, Freud's interpretation of dreams is of great help.

D.H. Lawrence was another predecessor of Durrell in his concentration on the inner lives of his characters rather than their outward behaviour. In a letter to Edward Garnett (5 June 1914), he explains:

> I don't so much care what the woman feels - in the ordinary usage of the word. That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care for what the woman is - what she is - inhumanly, physiologically, materially - according to the use of the word... You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognizable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element. (112)

Many of Durrell's characters are exercises in Freudian ideas of the inner self. Mary Graham Lund, in her article "Soft Focus on Crime", observes:

> Like Dostoevsky, Mr Durrell paints the emotions and thoughts and feelings - the reader often has a picture of the psyche before he knows what the character looks like in the flesh. (113)

One of the important themes discussed in Key and sustained in almost every novel written by Durrell is the theme of the

artist and his ego as different from him, or the artist and the duality of his personality. Borrowing Rimbaud's title of a poem, "Je Est un Autre", for one of his own, Durrell writes directly on the duality of personality:

> He watches me now, working late,
> Bringing a poem to life, his eyes
> Reflect the malady of De Nerval:
> O useless in this old house to question
> The mirrors, his impenetrable disguise. (114)

The same duality is referred to in another context. Discussing "the World Within", Durrell quotes both Lawrence and Dostoevsky on the duality of the ego, citing Freud's efforts in discovering the conscious and the unconscious layers of the human mind. In his essay "On Narcissim", Freud makes a distinction between two types of instinct - libido and the ego-instincts - which represent a duality of instinct. He explains:

> Our views have from the very first been dualistic and today they are even more definitely dualistic than before - now that we describe the opposition as being, not between ego instincts and sexual instincts but between life instincts and death instincts. (115)

According to Freud, the death instinct is an aggressive instinct directed against the subject himself. This point is expressed more fully in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, where two phenomena, sadism and masochism, are discussed as manifestations of the theory. The death instinct is manifested as the heir to the ego-instincts. On the other hand, Freud discusses the "ego-ideal", or what he sometimes calls "the Superego", which watches over the person's thoughts and actions. He explains that patients of this sort are always in a state of conflict and they often hear their "Superego" speaking to them in the third person: '"Now she's thinking of that again"; "Now he's going out".(116)

This duality is dramatized by Durrell. In The Black Book Lucifer is always conscious of his duality, his double self:

> ...I lie awake: the essential I, that is, from whom I expect response to noise, to gesture. The other, the not-me, the figment, the embryo, the white something which lives behind my face in the mirror, is lulled underground, hibernating. (117)

A little earlier, commenting on a fragment of Gregory's diary, Lucifer says:

> That is a fragment of the tender id of this book: the secretive, wincing plasm of Gregory tangled in his own egoismus; tangled in the green lace of the writing. I do not pretend to interpret. It would be too much to expect of the interrogative ego, the other me, whose function is simply to take a sort of hieroglyphic dictation from space, and annotate it, punctuate, edit. (118)

There is reference here to Freud's structural account of the mind in which the uncoordinated instinctual trends were called the "id", the organized realistic part of the "ego", and the critical and moralizing function the "superego", which Durrell refers to as "the interrogative ego". The above extract again reveals that Durrell consciously and deliberately attempted to apply Freud's doctrines to his characters, a practice which has been controversial among the critics. Can we treat characters in a novel as real, flesh-and-blood people capable of yielding to psychoanalysis? Or are characters in fiction different from real people? When some critics interpreted Shakespeare's Hamlet in the light of Freud's Oedipus Complex, a great controversy arose. Some critics discovered lapses of irrationality in Freud's views. George Watson in The Study of Literature (1969) reaches the conclusion that

> Freudianism...is plagued by certain internal contradictions of its own. On the one hand it is rationalistic in its ambition to investi-

> gate and reorganize the profoundly instinctual and pre-rational sources of human motive; on the other, it is profoundly sceptical of rationality itself. (119)

Not only is the novelist inside the novel aware of the fact of duality within himself, but the characters themselves are often quoted to express this awareness of their own duality. Bruce, the narrator in Monsieur, is both a subjective and objective medium for the unfolding of events. The action is narrated in the first person intermingled with the third person, as Bruce sees himself - his real self - as separate from his physical presence:

> How well I remembered, how well he remembered! The Bruce that I was, and the Bruce I become as I jot down these words, a few every day.
>
> .....
>
> (He was trying to remember how long it was since he had visited the city; but sitting there in his corner, half asleep and half awake, it seemed to him that in reality he had never been away. Or at least some part of him had always been present in its shady streets and quiet shabby squares.) (120)

Here Bruce looks inside to explore the self, and finds inner change; but he is also able to see himself from a distance, as if he were a different entity. Richard Wollheim, in his book on Freud, explains that Freud's theory of classifying man's instincts into libido and the ego-instincts rests mainly on a duality of instinct. "Remove the duality", Wollheim explains, "and the whole theory of the psycho-neurosis would surely crumble".(121) Aware of the duality and contradictory instincts within one person, Durrell quotes Freud, on this particular point in his Key:

> The laws of logic - above all, the law of contradiction - do not hold for processes in the Id. Contradictory impulses exist side by side without neutralizing each other or drawing apart; at most they combine in compromise-formations under the overpowering economic pressure towards discharging their energy. (122)

Both Gregory and Lucifer, the main characters in The Black Book, are aware of contradictory instincts within themselves. Bruce, in the above quotation, manifests the duality by holding two points of view. In The Ego and the Id Freud explains the two roles played by the ego and the Id:

> Whereas the ego is essentially the representative of the external world, of reality, the superego stands in contrast to it as the representative of the internal world, of the id. Conflicts between the ego and the ideal will....ultimately reflect the contrast between what is real and what is physical, between the external world and the internal world. (123)

According to Freud, the super-ego or the ego ideal has ideal values mostly in conflict with the ego which represents the external world. In Sappho, Minos, Sappho's tutor, tells her:

> You combine
> The opposites of qualities like no one else I know,
> Impulse and moderation, faith and treachery,
> Virtue and expedience. (124)

Another important theory expounded by Freud, which has subsequently been exploited in works of art is "the triangular character of the Oedipus situation and the constitutional bi-sexuality of each individual".(125) In a B.B.C. interview, Durrell was asked to explain why all the people in The Alexandria Quartet are "so wounded or hurt by sex or love".(126) His answer was that he was using the available psychology of the epoch:

> Under the terms of that, the double-sexed thing - which is an ancient gnostic thing - was a very important weapon that I tried to use. Because in talking about love, you make love with the opposite side of yourself, so to speak. The male has to mobilise the female in himself, and the female has to mobilise the male in herself, otherwise you don't get a love affair four-square. (127)

This explains the large number of homosexuals, lesbians or bisexuals in the Quartet. The brief lesbian relationship between Justine and Clea is passed over as something normal, necessitated by the circumstances and by the urge of their bodies, as a stage to pass through on the way to mature heterosexual relations. Liza's incestuous relation with her brother comes to an end when she meets Mountolive with whom she really falls in love. Balthazar's homosexuality is tackled as a commonplace urge, and even Scobie's eccentricity could be accepted under these terms.

In Monsieur, Bruce tells of the intimate relation between him, Sylvie and her dead brother Piers. The three had a strong incestuous relation; Sylvie was in love with both her husband and brother, Bruce in love with Sylvie and Piers; Piers with both brother and sister. There is a misinterpretation here of the triangular character of the Oedipus situation as Freud described it. Durrell combines in his characters the instinct of bisexuality as well as the Oedipus complex, which he substitutes for fraternal infatuation instead of the common Oedipus or Electra complex - the first when the son identifies himself with the mother and the second when the daughter identifies herself with the father. F.R. Karl, in his article "Physical and Metaphysical Love", cites another lapse in Durrell's understanding of Freud:

> The epigraph to Justine from Freud to the effect that every sexual relationship involved four people, is not merely a sensational misinterpretation of the original... For if Einstein upset notions of a stable physical world, Freud obviously upset those of a stable internal world; all relationships, and none more so than the nature of the sexual act, are ever-changing. (128)

Professor Karl raises two questions: the question of understanding Freud, and the question of accepting his views for all times.

Nevertheless, Durrell demonstrates that he is a "Freudian at heart". Darley, at the beginning of Justine, sees the city as a woman: "....it was because for me the city was something which I myself had deflowered".(129) Capodistria sees all objects as sex symbols. Justine was raped when a child and therefore cannot enjoy love-making unless she recaptures this moment in her life. Later when she was actually cured of this complex, Clea gave a Freudian interpretation, telling Darley that the change in Justine (for the worse) came about when she was cured of her fantasy which had kept her going. Clea believes the transformation in Justine is due to psychological reasons. Justine's existence owed a great deal to her psychological fantasy which kept her going, and

> having become cured of the mental aberrations brought about by her dreams, her fears, she has been deflated like a bag. For so long the fantasy occupied the foreground of her life that now she is dis-possessed of her entire stock-in-trade. It is not only that the death of Capodistria has removed the chief actor in this shadow-play, her chief gaoler. The illness itself had kept her on the move, and when it died it left in its place total exhaustion. She has....extinguished with her sexuality her very claims on life. (130)

Leila and Mountolive's relationship is based on Freud's Oedipus complex. As a matter of fact, Durrell attempts to create these

two characters as psychologically real figures. Mountolive suffers from an ear-ache whenever he visits home, where his mother would sit beside his bed:

> That night he was once more visited by the unaccountable affliction with which he always celebrated his return home - a crushing ear-ache which rapidly reduced him to a shivering painracked ghost of himself. It was a mystery, for no doctor had so far managed to allay - or even satisfactorily to diagnose - this onslaught of the petit mal. It never attacked him save when he was at home. As always, his mother ... materialized out of the darkness by his bed bringing the comfort of an ancient familiarity and the one specific which, since childhood, she had used to combat his distress. (131)

Mountolive's infantile adoration for his mother, resulting in an Oedipus complex, has created in him the desire for his mother's attention and love by assuming, unconsciously, that petit mal whenever he visits her. According to Freud, the mother is the first love object of her son, the thing which might remain with him during his adult life, causing the well-known Oedipus complex. Mountolive's love to Leila is derived from the same complex, but in the latter case he substitutes Leila for his mother. Leila takes the veil when she loses her beauty; turns internally, preferring seclusion to the outside world, and she lapses into trances and becomes a neurotic person. In Sappho, Sappho stammers when she loses her self-confidence. Nero, in Acte, is haunted by his sense of guilt for killing his mother, and he sees her ghost.

In contrast to Professor Karl's statement, Miss Mackworth believes Durrell has succeeded in capturing "the truth of time" by taking sex as his subject:

> I think we may deduce from his work that he believes sex to be the depot of all human activity and that it is through the study of man's sexual life that one can best understand the hidden truth about him, "the truth of Time". (132)

Like Eliot, Freud's influence was manifest in the intellectual life of his time. Freud's formulation of the mind as divided into an ego, a superego, an unconscious which contained a violent id (mass of uncontrollable instincts), and his demonstration that infantile life is not sexually "innocent" profoundly influenced contemporary and later writers who began to investigate motivations of all irrational behaviour. Some modernist trends, neo-romanticism and expressionism for instance, used Freud's conclusions for their own purposes, to give an ultra-individualistic penetration into the unconscious of modern man. Durrell has been fascinated by Freud's analysis in which he found a mould for his own ideas. The main attraction for Durrell, however, was Freud's interpretations of sex deviations, their causes and reactions on characters.

CONCLUSION

Two questions still remain to be settled. What kind of reality is expected in a work of art? How far has Durrell's work been shaped by the trends of his time?

When Durrell reiterated his claim concerning the reality of place in The Alexandria Quartet, he did not mean "imaginative reality" or "aesthetic reality" - "reality" conceived within the work of art, rather than with reference to something outside the literary artifact. He simply meant factual reality, truth to external reality in the real world. Nor did many critics who defended his writing assume he meant fictional reality. That he is not representing a "real" or a factual picture is clear from the preceding chapters. But, on the other hand, fictional reality which should comply with the law of probability and possibility is missing as well. One important feature characterizing a work of art, according to Aristotle and many subsequent theorists and critics, is its representational quality; the poet "imitates" not what happened, but what might happen; not the accidental features of character in action, but the universal type. In the Poetics Aristotle emphasizes:

> it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen - what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity...Poetry...is a more philosophical and higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular. (1)

Aristotle used the term "poet" and "poetry" to refer to the creative artist and the written art in general. The act of imitation or mimesis was first mentioned by Plato in the

Republic as a derogatory term, describing the poet's "counterfeit" creations, which reflect and mimic the transient appearances of this world. Aristotle stretched the term to give it a radically different and more complex application when he differentiated between factual reality and creative reality, thus elevating the act of imitation to mean representation and not second-hand copying or even mere copying.

At its heyday during the Victorian period, the novel (a term derived from the Italian word novella, a tale) was established as a literary medium for rendering life-like representation of society, people and everyday life. This kind of realism, which characterized the Victorian novel, was taken a step further by the French novelist Honoré de Balzac. The realism of Balzac was essentially an assertion that, far from being escapist and unreal, the novel was uniquely capable of revealing the truth of contemporary life in society. In La Comédie Humaine he saw himself as a scientific historian, recording and classifying the social life of France in all its aspects. This led him to describe the minutest details of everyday life, such as clothes, furniture, and food, to catalogue men into social types or species, and to radically analyse the economic basis of society. In the hands of Balzac, "realism" turned into naturalism.

Naturalism is therefore a step further towards a more realistic representation of life. However, photographic representation is refuted by one of its most powerful exponents, the French novelist, Emile Zola. In Le Roman Expérimental (1880) Zola attempts to explain what is meant by "naturalism":

> A contemptible reproach which they heap upon us naturalistic writers is the desire to be simply photographic. We have in vain declared that we admit the necessity of an artist's possessing an individual temperament and a personal expression... The idea of experiment carries with it the idea of modification. We start, indeed, from the true facts, which are our indestructible basis; but to show the mechanism of these facts it is necessary for us to produce and direct the phenomena, this is our share of invention, here is the genius of the book. (2)

Zola, then, disowns mere photographic delineation and emphasizes that, by the experimental method, naturalistic novelists are attempting to modify nature, without departing from nature. Zola was devoted to truth and justice and wanted to portray the lower depths of society in order to draw attention to the effects of heredity and environment.

All theories of realism rest on the assumption that the novel imitates reality, and that reality is more or less stable and commonly accessible. But it is possible to conceive of the relationship between art and reality in terms of imaginative creation rather than mere photographic representation. The novelist may imagine or invent a fictional world which is more than a copy of the real one, but he still has to give some semblance of reality, a likely picture, as had been conceived by Aristotle.

In the light of the above argument, Durrell's writing can be clearly seen to lean heavily towards the fairytale world of romance, which sometimes verges on the Gothic, with its supernatural elements, and which insures and propagates the improbable and the unlikely. Amos Elon, an Israeli journalist who visited Egypt recently, records that in Alexandria he found none

of the qualities associated with the place in The Alexandria Quartet. He comments that

> Durrell disliked Egypt. In The Alexandria Quartet he raided an incestuous city of the mind, a fantastic place that never existed. Durrell felt in Egypt like the banished Ovid in Romania. (3)

Did Durrell adopt this attitude because he was a foreigner? Graham Greene, writing on R.K. Narayan, remarks that the best realistic view of a country, giving the reader a genuine glimpse into the ordinary life of that country, is likely to be by a native writer:

> Kipling's India is the romantic playground of the Raj. I am touched nearly to tears by his best story, Without Benefit of Clergy, and yet the tears do not actually fall - I cannot believe in his Indian characters and even Kim leaves me sceptical. Kipling romanticises the Indian as much as he romanticises the administrators of Empire. E.M. Forster was funny and tender about his friend the Maharajah of Dewas and severely ironic about the English in India, but India escaped him all the same. (4)

Greene's view here is rather exaggerated, but it sheds light on the romantic attitude of writers towards a foreign country. Forster was able, in spite of his romantic attitude, to give a semblance of reality, and thus a true picture according to the art of the novel. John Fowles, in Daniel Martin, was able to give a true glimpse of Egyptian life in a few episodes, simply because he touched on two topics which attract Egyptians when in company: humour and politics. Presumably, Graham Greene had writers as romantic as Durrell in mind when he wrote:

> Perhaps no one can write in depth about a foreign country - he can only write about the effect of that country on his own fellow countrymen, living as exiles, or government servants, or visitors. He can only "touch in" the background of the foreign land. (5)

The difficulty, then, is in achieving "depth", as Graham Greene suggests, and this depends on how far a writer understands the spirit of place. James Joyce's Dubliners, R.K. Narayan's The Bachelor of Arts, Hardy's Wessex novels, to give a few examples, achieve such depth and understanding. Naguib Mahfouz, an Egyptian novelist, in his masterpiece Miramar, a novel about Alexandria, achieves the same kind of depth and realism. Such depth is not demanded of a novelist, however, but a highly probable picture, which might not be exactly true, is still a vital element in the good novel.

Durrell's The Alexandria Quartet deviates from the world of realism into a world of fantasy, Durrell's own created world. His Alexandria, compared to ~~the~~ Alexandria depicted by Mahfouz, for instance, is a world of the imagination, the intangible, the highly unlikely, the improbable. Durrell considers Alexandria as one of the characters in the Quartet, and as a character Alexandria is seen as suffering from a kind of schizophrenia. The city is sometimes seen as a romantic depot with historical and mythological associations, and sometimes as a mundane oriental spot with beggars in the streets and native black women ululating at hospitals. The two pictures are juxtaposed but are never reconciled to form a unified whole; nothing is true, probable or convincing. This dichotomy is due to the influence of orientalism on Durrell's vision. The Quartet portrays an evocative sense of life in Alexandria but the city does not emerge as a recognizable place.

The second question is: how far has Durrell been shaped by the intellectual and artistic trends of his time? In fact,

there have been many influences on Durrell's writing: igniting influence, in the case of Henry Miller; thematic influence, in the cases of Oswald Spengler, C.P. Cavafy, the Marquis de Sade and others. Miller's influence was in encouraging Durrell to trust his own imagination, to write freely what he had been accumulating in his mind, to liberate his art from inhibiting conventions. Some critics note Miller's influence on Durrell's The Black Book. This has, in fact, been exaggerated because in Durrell's first novel, Pied Piper of Lovers, written almost at the same time as Miller's Tropic of Cancer, there is the same preoccupation with erotic love as in The Black Book. It is true that the approach and treatment are romantic, but Durrell's later work does not tend towards more realistic rendering. When he wrote his first novel, however, he was not sure of its artistic quality, its legitimacy as a work of art. The publication of Tropic of Cancer freed him and set his mind at peace, for he saw that he could go on writing in the same manner without being embarrassed about the nature of his writing.

Durrell met Miller at the Villa Seurat in Paris, and both were "getting drunk on Spengler".(6) Spengler's The Decline of the West, a major influence on the intellectual and literary life of Europe between the two world wars, had a special influence on Durrell who was aware of the state of "modern man" in "a kind of impasse". Spengler's ideas seemed to express the dissatisfaction of the age, as did Eliot's poem, The Waste Land, an epitome of the state of sterility, deadlock and confusion of the age. Durrell's The Black Book draws on the main symbolism of The Waste Land and is based on a contrast between

two sets of values in an attempt to portray the agony and futility of living in England. Durrell eventually drew on Spengler's book directly when he wrote Tunc, as he reveals to Miller in a letter. In a note at the end of this novel he points out a connection between Tunc and other novels: "Here and there in the text attentive readers may discern the odd echo from The Alexandria Quartet and even from The Black Book; this is intentional".(7) The main relationship between Spengler and Durrell, however, is the theme of the decline of Western culture, the futility and confusion of modern life, which is also the main theme of The Waste Land. Durrell wrote to Fraser that he based Tunc on a quotation from Petronius; likewise, the epigraph to The Waste Land is quoted from Petronius, indicating the agony of living and the desire to die. The Quartet borrows the symbolism of The Waste Land, the theme of resurrection and life after death, to convey a sense of hope. The message is that sex in itself is meaningless as it brings agony, death, frustration and confusion.

While in Alexandria, Durrell felt great affinity with the Greek Alexandrian poet, C.P. Cavafy, whose spirit was, in Durrell's view, impregnating the place. This is expressed as an influence on Darley, the narrator in the Quartet who to some extent stands for Durrell himself. Durrell first came to know Cavafy through E.M. Forster's translation of one of his poems, "The God Abandons Antony", in his first book about Alexandria, Pharos and Pharillon (1923). During his stay in Alexandria, Durrell shared with Cavafy the same state of mind expressed by the Greek poet in his poems: the magnitude of the Greek past, and the sense of continuation in modern Greece. In that sense,

Alexandria has been considered, by Durrell and Cavafy, a link between the past and the present, attractive but agonizing, the historical place where Antony and Cleopatra met, so that strong evocations of love and death still hover in the air. W.H. Auden, in his introduction to a translated volume of Cavafy's poems, defines the main themes of his poems as: love, art, and politics in the original Greek sense. In the Quartet Darley is also concerned with these three topics. Darley is so steeped in Cavafy's poetry that it comes easily to his mind on many occasions. J.L. Pinchin in her book Alexandria Still: Forster, Durrell, and Cavafy points out the sense of irony and detachment in the three writers' attitude towards certain aspects of Egyptian life. This sense of detachment, most noticeable in the principal narrator of the Quartet, seems to have been Durrell's attitude while in Alexandria. Cavafy, too, remained aloof and detached from the local inhabitants, as Rae Dalven observes:

> It is hard to imagine Cavafy giving his affection to a Turk or Egyptian - though it is known that he had made love on occasion with Egyptians, in spite of his preference for his compatriots. (8)

In identifying himself with Cavafy, who tended to keep himself apart from the local, non-Greek scene, Durrell was sharing the same attitude towards the local people. He was completely absorbed in Greek culture, which has had a lasting influence on his attitude towards other cultures and other ways of living. Local Alexandria seemed to him a prison depriving him of his beloved Greece, an attitude he expressed in his poems.

The sexual and sadistic ideas of the Marquis de Sade appealed to Durrell's taste, and the epigraphs to each volume

of the Quartet are taken from de Sade's works. Durrell borrowed the title of one of de Sade's novels for the first novel of the Quartet, Justine. In his novels, de Sade created a world of fantasy to suit his purpose as he depicted all sorts of sexual deviations and erotic love. In his portrayal of Justine, Durrell seems to draw heavily on de Sade's licentious characters. There is also an element of sadism in Durrell's writing, which he explains as follows in Freudian terms:

> My use of sadistic violence is a deliberate use of the Castration complex - so much more shocking than the old conventional Oedipus complex. (9)

However he justifies it, Durrell is inclined towards violent actions in his fiction. In life, too, the sport he most enjoys is bull-fighting. He also keeps vultures, feeding them on raw meat. His works certainly abound in sadistic descriptions and violent episodes: the hacking to death of camels in the Quartet, Petronius' ritual suicide in Acte, and Sappho's violent death in Sappho are a few examples. His use of blood as a symbol in his poem The Red Limbo Lingo is a rather different example of his use of sadism.

The influences which seem to have had the most lasting effect on Durrell, however, are discussed in his only book of criticism. Carl Bode, in "A Guide to Alexandria", states that Durrell wrote to him to explain that all the ideas in the Quartet are to be found in his book A Key to Modern British Poetry in germ form. A close examination of this book will indicate these influences on Durrell.

In order to examine the effect of the modern interpretation of time and the ego on shaping modern poetry, Durrell expounds the ideas of Einstein, Freud, and Eliot in an effort to unite them. Einstein's relativity theory and the principle of indeterminacy, and Freud's analysis of the mind into conscious and unconscious are cited as important influences on contemporary poetry. Besides devoting a whole chapter to T.S. Eliot, Durrell examines in some detail Eliot's Gerontion and The Waste Land. He declares that

> the problem ... of all modern poetry of any calibre and obscurity can best be seen in the light of our ideas about the ego and time. Out of our changing ideas about each will come the new poetry of tomorrow. (10)

He then draws a comparison between Tennyson's Ulysses and Eliot's Gerontion in an effort "to understand a few more of the ideas which separate them, which decree their different modes of expression".(11) In Gerontion, as in The Waste Land, time is cyclic rather than extended; the poem "exhibits in its structure something like the pattern-behaviour of quanta".(12) Whereas Ulysses has a beginning, a middle and an end, Gerontion is "simply there in a state of pure manifestation".(13)

Another distinction between the two poems is noted. Ulysses yields to a conventional interpretation, but, as a modern poem, Gerontion should be interpreted in the same way that a dream works: "The dream takes the short cut across the accepted linguistic relations - just as Gerontion does".(14) For, according to Freud:

> The laws of logic - above all, the law of contradiction - do not hold for processes in the Id. Contradictory impulses exist side by side without neutralizing each other

> or drawing apart... In the Id there is nothing corresponding to the idea of time, no recognition of the passage of time. (15)

According to Durrell, "the dream has its own attitude to space and time".(16)

This attempt to bring together two major influences on the writing of the age reveals Durrell's absorption of the influence of Einstein and Freud. He considers "time and the ego are the two determinants of style for the twentieth century".(17) Einstein's criteria have affirmed our subjective views. "It is important to realize", Durrell affirms, "that Einstein's theory joined up subject and object, in very much the same way as it joined up space and time".(18) This theory negates the idea that any one individual can ever possess absolute knowledge:

> Under the terms of the new idea a precise knowledge of the outer world becomes an impossibility. This is because we and the outer world (subject and object) constitute a whole. (19)

This conclusion is used by Durrell in the Quartet where precise knowledge of the incidents is difficult to attain because of multi-dimensional views. It is likewise difficult to have a precise knowledge of characters because of the contradictory views concerning them. On the other hand, it is possible for the mind to hold such contradictory views, since "the law of contradiction" does not "hold for processes in the Id".(20) Darley, contemplating what he has written of Justine, says:

> I had only been attesting, in all I had written, to the power of an image which I had created involuntarily by the mere act of seeing Justine. There was no question of true or false. Nymph? Goddess? Vampire? Yes, she was all of these, and none of them. (21)

Durrell believes further that Eliot's Gerontion and The Waste Land, in particular, can be taken as examples of the manipulation of modern trends. Durrell has been intrigued by Eliot's use of cyclic time in the Four Quartets: "In my end is my beginning".(22) He indicates that it is "in small things like this that we discern the new values of the age".(23)

In "Burnt Norton" Eliot writes:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future
> And time future contained in time past. (24)

There is an echo of these lines in the prose section of The Red Limbo Lingo:

> The day which we call today will
> tomorrow become yesterday; tomorrow
> will become today in twenty-four hours. (25)

Eliot seems to have exercised the most direct influence on Durrell, who followed him as an example and a master of modern poetry. Durrell has also been intrigued by Eliot's use of symbolism.

In Clea, the fourth movement of The Alexandria Quartet, the incidents are deployed temporally, and a strong sense of time is invoked in order to impart the extreme change over the characters. Darley emphasizes the change at the beginning of Clea:

> How long had I been away? I could hardly
> compute, though calendar-time gives little
> enough indication of the aeons which
> separate one self from another, one day
> from another; and all this time I had
> been living there, truly, in the Alexandria
> of my heart's mind. (26)

Darley, Nessim, Justine, Mnemjian and others have changed. A different Nessim meets Darley and, looking at him sharply, tells

him: "'Darley, you have changed very much'".(27) The wheel of fortune has turned and Nessim becomes poor and loses one eye, while Mnemjian gets rich, marrying Halil's rich widow. Even Justine who evoked an aura of attraction and romanticism around her has become less attractive to Darley. Clea becomes more attractive, but is still a mediocre painter; Darley is hesitant and passive.

Then suddenly on the last pages things seem to undergo transformation once more. Justine gains her attractiveness once more and is seen with the Memlik on their way to meet Nessim, whose luck has suddenly changed, and both Nessim and Justine are looking forward to a bigger International project in Switzerland. Clea's wounded hand, the wound itself a symbol of death, paints better now and she becomes "an artist at last". Darley is shown in Justine as a failure: "I lack the will-power to do anything with my life, to better my position by hard work, to write".(28) However, at the end of Clea there is a notable change in him. He writes to Clea:

> It came on a blue day, quite unpremeditated, quite unannounced, and with such ease I would not have believed it. I had been until then like some timid girl, scared of the birth of her first child. (29)

Darley has at last grown into an artist; he found himself writing "words which presage simply the old story of an artist coming of age".(30)

NOTES ON CHAPTER I

1 Lawrence Durrell, Collected Poems: 1931-1974, ed. James A. Brigham (London: Faber, 1980), p.158.

2 Like Durrell, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was born in India, of British parents. At the age of six he was sent to England to be educated. He spent seven miserable years in the care of a sadistic, pious female relative, the experience of which left an indelible mark on him. Saki [Hector Hugh Munro] (1870-1916) was born in Burma and brought up in Dorset by two sadistic puritan aunts whose example left a remarkable effect on his life and writing.

3 Lawrence Durrell and Henry Miller, A Private Correspondence, ed. George Wickes, 2nd ed. (London: Faber, 1962), p.60.

4 Ibid., p.61.

5 Ibid., p.343.

6 Durrell, The Black Book, published in Paris 1938 (London: Faber, 1977), p.244.

7 Henry Miller, "The Durrell of The Black Book Days", in The World of Lawrence Durrell, ed. Harry T. Moore (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), p.95.

8 Mohammad Al-Shafaki, "Lawrence Durrell Talks to Al-Katib", Al-Katib (Cairo, May 1978), p.145.

9 Robin Fedden et al. eds., Personal Landscape (London: Editions Poetry London, 1945), "An Anatomy of Exile", an Introduction by Robin Fedden, p.8.

10 Joan Susan Goulianos, "Lawrence Durrell's Greek Landscape" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Columbia, 1968), p.2.

11 Derek Stanford, "Lawrence Durrell", The Freedom of Poetry (London: The Falcon Press, 1947), p.123.

12 Durrell, Collected Poems, p.158.

13 Ibid., p.159.

14 Ibid., p.161.

15 Idem, The Red Limbo Lingo (London: Faber, 1971), p.40. All poems in this volume, except "The Red Limbo Lingo", were later included in Vega and Other Poems (1971) and in Collected Poems (1980).

16 Idem, Collected Poems, "Bere Regis", p.194.

17 Idem, Spirit of Place, Alan G. Thomas ed. (London: Faber, 1969), p.74.

18 Ibid., p.75.

19 Durrell and Miller, A Private Correspondence, p.195.

20 Ibid., p.210.

21 Ibid., p.201.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., pp.251-2.

24 Durrell, Spirit of Place, p.94.

25 Idem, An Irish Faustus (London: Faber, 1963), quoted from the Jacket.

26 Idem, The Big Supposer: An Interview with Marc Alyn, translated by Francine Barker (New York: Grove Press, 1974), p.135.

27 Idem, Livia (London: Faber, 1978), p.11.

28 Jan Morris, "Durrell - On a Tourist Bus?", Encounter, XLIX No 3 (September 1977), p.77.

29 Ibid.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II

1 Panic Spring; The Black Book; The Dark Labyrinth; Justine; Balthazar; Mountolive; Clea; Tunc and Nunquam.

2 Durrell, "A Landmark Gone", Middle East Anthology, John Waller and Erik de Mauny eds. (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1945), pp.19-21.

3 [Durrell], "Hellene and Philhellene", unsigned article, The Times Literary Supplement, 13 May 1949, p.306.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Durrell, The Dark Labyrinth, 2nd ed., (London: Faber, 1964), pp.192-3. Originally published as Cefalu, (London: Editions Poetry, 1947).

7 Idem, The Black Book, p.19.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., p.21.

10 Durrell, Tunc (London: Faber, 1968), p.130.

11 Ibid., p.154.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p.101.

14 Ibid., p.95.

15 Ibid., p.90.

16 Cited by J.E. Zimmerman, Dictionary of Classical Mythology (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p.233.

17 Durrell, Sappho (London: Faber, 1950), p.33.

18 Idem, Collected Poems, p.57.

19 Ibid., p.111.

20 Ibid., p.273.

21 Ibid., p.321.

22 Ibid., p.116.

23 Ibid., p.154.

24 Ibid., p.130.

25 Ibid., p.132.

26 Ibid., p.133.

27 Goulianos, "Lawrence Durrell's Greek Landscape", p.78.

28 Durrell, Collected Poems, p.150.

29 Ibid., p.130.

30 Ibid., p.127.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Durrell, "Conon in Alexandria", Middle East Anthology, pp.127-8. The early version of the poem undergoes a real and drastic surgery in which lines are cut off or altered and a number of stanzas added. Here is an example: the fourth stanza in the early version, (nine in all), reads:

> Your solitary is presumed quite happy,
> Writing these interminable whining letters,
> Sitting in a window with a book
> To taste, presumably, the island wind
> Blown on wet lips and shutters out to Rhodes,
> In a cold February, too late for fires.

This becomes the final stanza, (twenty in all), in the later version of the poem, rewritten in the following way:

> I have passed all this day in what they would call patience.
> Not writing, alone in my window, with my flute,
> Having read in a letter that last immortal February
> That 'Music is only love, looking for words'.

34 Ibid., p.127.

35 Ibid.

36 Durrell, Spirit of Place, p.29.

37 Gerald Durrell, My Family and Other Animals (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956), p.11.

38 Lawrence Durrell, Prospero's Cell, an epigraph to the book.

39 Idem, Spirit of Place, p.34.

40 Durrell, A Private Correspondence, p.188.

41 John Unterecker, Lawrence Durrell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p.16.

42 Durrell, op.cit., p.210.

43 Ibid., p.190.

44 Durrell, Prospero's Cell, p.20

45 Ibid., p.19

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., p.27.

48 Ibid., pp.20-1.

49 Ibid., p.23.

50 Ibid., p.59.

51 Ibid., p.35.

52 Ibid., p.96.

53 Ibid., p.101.

54 Ibid., p.117.

55 Ibid., p.131.

56 Ibid., p.133.

57 Durrell, Reflections of a Marine Venus (London: Faber, 1953), 2nd ed., p.16.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., p.19.

60 Ibid., p.23.

61 Ibid., p.42.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., p.53.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., p.60.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid., p.61.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid., p.97.

70 Ibid., p.153.

71 Durrell, Bitter Lemons (London: Faber, 1957), p.11.

72 Ibid., p.17.

73 Ibid., p.19.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., p.20.

76 Ibid., p.25.

77 Ibid., p.53.

78 Ibid., p.29.

79 Ibid., pp.31-2.

80 Ibid., p.38.

81 Ibid., p.94.

82 Ibid., p.192.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid., p.193.

85 Durrell, Sicilian Carousel (London: Faber, 1977), p.19.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid., p.46.

89 Ibid., p.52.

90 Ibid., p.110.

91 Ibid., pp.65-6.

92 Durrell, The Greek Islands (London: Faber, 1978), p.8.

93 Ibid., p.36.

94 Ibid., p.38.

95 Ibid., p.63.

96 Ibid., p.64.

97 Ibid., pp.102-3.

98 Ibid., p.104.

99 Ibid., p.31.

100 Ibid., p.25.

101 Ibid., p.18.

102 Ibid., as quoted by Durrell, p.45.

103 Ibid., p.185.

104 Ibid., p.189.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid., p.276.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III

1 Durrell, The Alexandria Quartet, a one volume edition comprising Justine (1957), Balthazar (1958), Mountolive (1958), and Clea (1960) (London: Faber, 1962), a Note to Justine, p.14.

Unless otherwise cited, all subsequent references to the Quartet are made to this one volume edition. Notes, however, will refer to titles of individual volumes.

2 Idem, Balthazar, p.213.

3 Walter G. Creed, '"The Whole Pointless Joke"?: Darley's Search for Truth in The Alexandria Quartet', Etudes Anglaises, Vol.28 (1975), pp.165-73.

4 Durrell, Balthazar (London: Faber, 1958), a Note to the original edition, cut out in the one volume edition of the Quartet, p.9.

5 Shafaki, "Lawrence Durrell Talks to Al-Kalib", p.146.

6 Ramez el Halawany, "An Extraordinarily Humble Sorcerer: Lawrence Durrell Speaks to Ramez el Halawany", The Egyptian Gazette, 6 November 1977, p.4.

7 Ibid.

8 Durrell, Justine, pp.56-7.

9 Edward E. Said, Orientalism (Henley-on-Thames: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p.1.

10 Benjamin De Mott, "Grading the Emanglons", Hudson Review, Vol.13, No.3, (1960), p.357.

11 Gilbert Highet, "The Alexandrians of Lawrence Durrell", Horizon, Vol.II (March 1960), p.114.

12 Rhoda Amine, Seven Years in the Sun (London: Robert Hale, 1959), p.35.

13 Durrell, "With Durrell in Egypt", The New York Times Magazine, 11 June 1978, p.56.

14 Amine, op.cit., p.36.

15 Said, op.cit., p.103.

16 Durrell, "With Durrell in Egypt", p.44.

17 Ibid.

18 Idem, Mountolive, p.488.

19 Idem, Balthazar, p.264.

20 Evelyn Baring [Lord Cromer], Modern Egypt (New York: Macmillan, 1908), p.617.

21 Durrell, Mountolive, p.414.

22 Edward William Lane, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (London: Alexander Gardner, 1898), p.231.

23 Durrell, op.cit., p.425.

24 The Koran, Surah LIII, 13-15.

25 Durrell, Mountolive, p.626.

26 Highet, op.cit., p.117.

27 Asked by Suzanne Henig, in an interview, if he believed in a Deity, Durrell replied: "I never think about the deity (sic), nor ever feel I can possibly be of concern to such a thing if it exists. I live in a dream." This view is apparent in the Quartet when Darley, who stands for Durrell to some extent, professes his disbelief in any religion: "I found no religion worth while which contained the faintest grain of propitiation - and which can escape the charge?."

28 Paul W. Harrison, Doctor in Arabia (London: Robert Hale, 1943), p.265.

29 Ibid.

30 As quoted by Said in Orientalism, p.287.

31 Ibid., pp.287-8.

32 Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1939), p.240.

33 Durrell, Mountolive, p.614.

34 Ibid., p.613.

35 Said, op.cit., p.312.

36 Durrell, Balthazar, p.332.

37 Ibid., p.325.

38 Ibid., p.293.

39 Idem, Justine, p.49.

40 Idem, Balthazar, p.243.

41 Idem, Justine, p.179.

42 Ibid., p.183.

43 Ibid., p.134.

44 G.S. Fraser, The Modern Writer and his World (London: Derek Verschoyle, 1953), p.183.

45 Mahmoud Manzalaoui, "Curate's Egg: An Alexandrian Opinion of Durrell's Quartet", Études Anglaises, Vol.15 (1962), p.254.

46 D.J. Enright, "Alexandrian Nights' Entertainments: Lawrence Durrell's Quartet", in Conspirators and Poets (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), p.115.

47 Mary Graham Lund, "Submerge for Reality: The New Novel Form of Lawrence Durrell", Southwest Review, Vol.44 (1959), p.232.

48 Hilary Corke, "Mr. Durrell and Brother Criticus", Encounter, Vol.14, No.5 (1960), p.65.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., pp.67-8.

51 Ibid., p.68.

52 Ibid., p.67.

53 Ibid., p.68.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Manzalaoui, op.cit., p.252.

58 Ibid., p.249.

59 Ibid., p.248.

60 Ibid., p.249.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., p.251.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., p.252.

66 Robert Scholes, The Fabulators (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.24.

67 Durrell, Clea, p.657.

68 Idem, Spirit of Place, p.76.

69 Idem, A Private Correspondence, p.339.

70 E.M. Forster, Pharos and Pharillon, 3rd ed. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), p.12.

71 Idem, Alexandria : A History and a Guide, 2nd ed. (Alexandria: Whitehead Morris, 1938), p.69.

72 Galina Vromen, "Durrell Takes Stock", International Herald Tribune, 17 November 1978, p.11.

73 Fedden, op.cit., p.14.

74 Durrell, A Private Correspondence, p.187.

75 Vromen, op.cit., p.11.

76 W.W. Robson, Modern English Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.156.

77 Eugene Lyons and Harry T. Antrim, "An Interview with Lawrence Durrell", Shenandoah, Vol.22 (1971), p.47.

78 Durrell, Justine, p.11.

79 Ibid., p.23.

80 Lionel Trilling, "The Quartet: Two Reviews", in The World of Lawrence Durrell, ed. H.T. Moore, p.57.

81 Durrell, Justine, p.39.

82 Idem, Balthazar, p.211.

83 Ibid.

84 Idem, Justine, p.21.

85 Ibid., p.49.

86 Ibid., p.51.

87 Ibid., p.89.

88 Ibid., p.82.

89 Ibid., p.81.

90 Ibid., p.64.

91 Ibid., p.102.

92 Ibid., p.107.

93 Ibid., p.109

94 The name Durrell gives to Clea is apt as its association makes it easy for us to identify the symbolical significance. "Clea" is similar to "Clio" who stands for the muse of inspiration in art. Clio is said to be one of the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne who presided over the various kinds of poetry, arts and the sciences.

95 Durrell, Justine, p.29.

96 Ibid.

97 Idem, Balthazar, p.252.

98 Idem, Mountolive, p.407.

99 Idem, Balthazar, p.259.

100 Idem, Mountolive, p.413.

101 Ibid., p.403.

102 Idem, Justine, p.137.

103 Idem, Balthazar, p.281.

104 Idem, Justine, p.194.

105 Ibid., p.23.

106 Ibid., p.80.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., p.78.

109 Ibid.

110 McPherson, op.cit., p.3.

111 John Marlowe, The Golden Age of Alexandria (London: Victor Gollancz, 1971), p.15.

112 Durrell, Justine, p.86.

113 Ibid., p.17.

114 Ibid., p.18.

115 Ibid., p.38.

116 Ibid.

117 Idem, Spirit of Place, p.156.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., p.157.

120 Idem, Justine, p.38.

121 Ibid., p.19.

122 Ibid., p.26.

123 Ibid., p.23.

124 John A. Weigel, Lawrence Durrell (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1965), p.58.

125 Durrell, Justine, p.23.

126 Ibid., p.31.

127 Idem, Collected Poems, p.252.

128 Idem, Balthazar, p.231.

129 Ibid., p.231.

130 Ibid.

131 Idem, Justine, p.102.

132 Ibid., p.98.

133 Ibid., p.33.

134 Ibid., p.34.

135 Ibid., pp.37-8.

136 Ibid., p.34.

137 Ibid., p.36.

138 Ibid.

139 Idem, Balthazar, p.255.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

1 Mary Graham Lund, "Submerge for Reality: The New Novel Form of Lawrence Durrell", Southwest Review 44 (1959), p.232.

2 Durrell, The Big Supposer, p.136.
It might be interesting to quote in this context a relevant item in Durrell's horoscope as examined by Conrad Moricand and published in the book cited above. Moricand was given Durrell's date of birth by Henry Miller and, without any foreknowledge of Durrell he wrote: "The subject's way of behaving in society is indicated by Sagittarius...The sign of Sagittarius is represented as 'a musketeer, looter of works of art, on a galloping horse'".

3 Durrell, Balthazar, p.303.

4 McPherson, Moulids, pp.68-9.

5 Durrell, Balthazar, p.319.

6 McPherson, op.cit., p.78.

7 Durrell, Balthazar, p.242.

8 Ibid., p.317.

9 McPherson, op.cit., p.16.

10 Ibid., p.314.

11 Durrell, Balthazar, p.319.

12 McPherson, op.cit., p.314.

13 Ibid.

14 Durrell, Balthazar, pp.319-20.

15 McPherson, op.cit., p.315.

16 Durrell, Balthazar, p.320.

17 McPherson, op.cit., pp.315-6.

18 Durrell, Balthazar, p.320.

19 McPherson, op.cit., p.321.

20 Durrell, Balthazar, p.321.

21 McPherson, op.cit., p.316.

22 Durrell, Balthazar, p.321.

23 McPherson, op.cit., p.77.

24 Durrell, Balthazar, p.318.

25 McPherson, op.cit., p.286.

26 Lane, Manners, p.578.

27 Durrell, Balthazar, p.247.

28 Idem, Clea, p.819.

29 Ibid., p.806.

30 Durrell, Mountolive, p.626.

31 Idem, Justine, pp.133, 163; and Monsieur, p.105.

32 Idem, Justine, p.56.

33 Ibid., p.21.

34 Ibid., p.26.

35 Idem, Justine, p.26; Mountolive, p.626.

36 Idem, Balthazar, p.256.

37 Ibid., p.266.

38 Ibid., p.268.

39 Idem, Clea, p.859.

40 McPherson, op.cit., p.79.

41 Durrell, Clea, p.845.

42 Idem, Justine, p.23.

43 Idem, Balthazar, p.262.

44 Idem, Clea, p.769.

45 Idem, Mountolive, p.648.

46 Lane, op.cit., p.523.

47 Durrell, Mountolive, p.647.

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